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This **Saltist boat rod range** not only covers all down and uptide techniques but the real stand out design is the 11' Match, serving across the typical mix of tidal conditions.

The range starts with two versatile 7'6" choices covering 15-25lb and 25-40lb classes. These feature a 1+1 assembly: a long top plus handle.

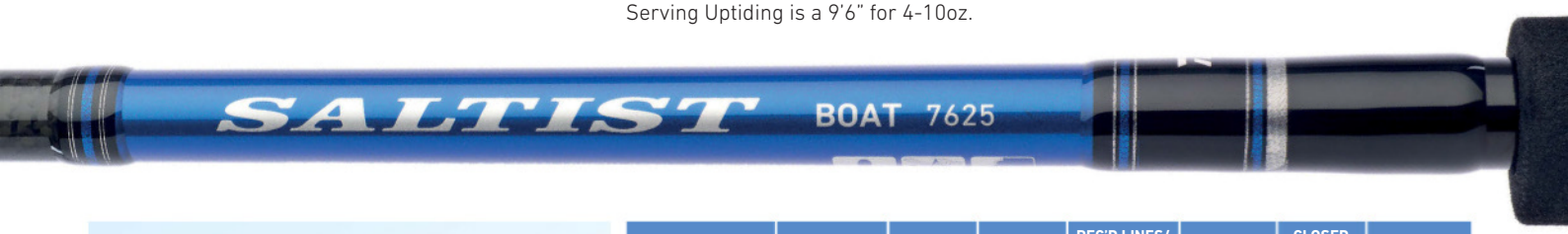
Longer options of 8'6", offering the same line class range, assemble as two equal sections, hence their shorter packed length of 134cm.

Serving Uptiding is a 9'6" for 4-10oz.

The 'tippy' action helps you propel rigs away from the boat with ease but still deliver pronounced drop backs when fish dislodge the lead.

However, it is the 11' Match edition which brings a different thinking to catching on a busy boat or across the changing tide.

The longer design gives you reach away from the congestion of other fishing lines and the standout feature of three push in fibreglass tips ensures you are able to keep in touch with bites across a broad mix of set ups and tidal speeds.



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STB8630-BU	BOAT	8'6"	383g	15-30lbs	2	134cm	£249.99
STB8640-BU	BOAT	8'6"	393g	25-40lbs	2	134cm	£249.99
STU962-BU	UPTIDE	9'6"	475g	4-10oz	1+1	183cm	£259.99
STM1130-BU	MATCH	11'0"	484g	12-30lbs	2+3 QT's	172cm	£329.99

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WELCOME

ISSUE 639 SEPTEMBER 2024

Don't miss next month's issue including fishing under the midnight sun in Arctic Norway

TRY SOMETHING NEW!

Nothing excites me more than trying something new! Whether that's Lasse Bøe's expert feature on float fishing for large predators, such as halibut (page 6); Joe Walker's guide to fly fishing for mullet (page 12); Chris Kennedy's ballan wrasse PB story about using otherwise-to-be-discarded scallop frills as bait (page 24); or ultralight fishing for Couch's bream with LRF specialist Ben Bassett (page 18), this issue is brimming with fresh ideas and unique content to inspire you to get out there and try something new.

That's not all that's new in this issue: sea angling legend Jim Whippy begins a new column – Whippy's World. Each month Jim will be reporting on his angling exploits and sharing his wisdom from areas including shore, boat, match fishing and species hunting. You can read Whippy's World on page 76.

Phill Williams also reports on new rule changes to the British record fish system allowing boat-caught claims to be measured rather than weighed – the biggest shake-up to the sea angling record list in living memory. Find out more about how you can now make a length-based claim on page 78.

Don't miss this month's First Look special featuring a range of awesome new products from Swedish tackle company Westin. Many of you will already know the Sandy Andy lure from Westin's range. However, until now the freshwater-focused company has been making leaps and bounds into the UK sea fishing market with some superb looking bass fishing items which you can read more about starting on page 84.

For those of you looking to get out on the water cheaply this summer holiday, and without the fuss and expense of a trailer and all the gubbins that comes with owning a boat, Tim Macpherson has been testing the new Hydrus 7 SIB from the Inflatable Boat Fishing company. Head to page 93 for Tim's assessment of how this portable little fishing boat performs.

Finally, don't miss your chance to get your hands on a Sonik SKS Black bass fishing set-up worth £150. We are giving away three sets in this month's competition. Details of how to enter are on page 90. Good luck!

Until next month
David

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THRILL OF THE BRILL: TOP TIPS FOR SHORE BRILL & TURBOT
DOGS
HOW SMOOTHOUNDS BECAME THE UK'S NO.1 SALTWATER
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HOW TO CONTACT US: EDITORIAL

sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk

Editor
David Mitchell

Contributing Editor
Dave Lewis
Email: david.lewis21@hotmail.com

Art Editor
Mark Hyde

CONTRIBUTORS: Ben Bassett, Robin Bradley, Lasse Bøe, Jake Davison, Henry Gilbey, Liam Gunn, Chris Kennedy, Dave Lewis, Tim Macpherson, Brian Pask, Simon Smith, Joe Walker, Jim Whippy, Phill Williams, Mike Thrussell.

Write to: Sea Angler, Kelsey Publishing Ltd, The Granary, Downs Court, Yalding Hill, Yalding, Maidstone, Kent, ME18 6AL

ADVERTISING
Talk Media Ltd
David Lerpiniere, tel: 01732 445326
Email: david@talk-media.uk
Advert Production: production@talk-media.uk
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Email: seaangler@kelseyclassifieds.co.uk

MARKETING
Director of Operations: Gill Lambert
Retail Director: Steve Brown
Subscription Director: Kevin McCormick
Senior Subs Marketing Manager: Nick McIntosh

PRODUCTION
Print Production/Distribution Liaison Manager:
Georgina Harris, email: georgina.harris@kelsey.co.uk
Print Production Controller:
Hayley Brown, email: hayley.brown@kelsey.co.uk
Distribution: Great Britain – Seymour Distribution Limited
2 East Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PT
Tel. 020 7429 4000
www.seymour.co.uk
Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland – Newspread, tel: +353 23 886 3850

MANAGEMENT
Chief Operating Officer: Phil Weeden
Publishing Director: Gareth Beesley

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Cover pic: Joe Walker

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TACKLE

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Words and Photography by LASSE BØE

XL FLOAT FISHING

Float fishing for halibut sounds crazy, right? Not so fast. Norwegian specimen hunter, Lasse Bøe, explains how you can successfully target these giant flatties, and other big predators, from the shore using super-sized float tackle and tactics

Float fishing is probably one of the most cherished fishing methods I use for halibut. Ever since my first surface encounter with a halibut many years ago, I have wanted to catch one on a float rig. When I started to target them specifically from the shore with a float rig years ago, it took some time to figure out how to do it. Float fishing for halibut from the boat is old news, but from the shore this is still new territory. This is the method to use when the fish are especially picky or when you want to search over a larger area.

MAKING A FLOAT FOR BIG BAITS

You just can't beat a big float made from a 500ml fizzy drink bottle. Mountain Dew is ideal if you can find it: its bright fluorescent colour makes it easy to see from a distance. It's probably the cheapest big bait float you will every buy .

You may think this is a big float, but bear in mind, you will be fishing with a whole bait fish and a heavy sinker as well (to accommodate the heavy setup, greater measures are important to consider), and you also need the buoyancy of the bottle for

Like all other fishing, the size of the catch is not guaranteed. Releasing the smaller ones is important

The Power Gum stop knot is a small, but crucial part of the float rig

The swivel is pushed through the hole in the cap

setting the hook. To make a float, you need a 500ml bottle, electrical tape, a lighter, a steel wire (grip lead wire works well), hot melt glue, a swivel with a snap and needle nosed pliers with cutters.

Start by warming up the steel wire and poke it through the bottle cap and make a hole big enough to put the eye of the swivel through. Cut off a ¾inch piece of the steel wire and put it through the eye of the swivel from the inside of the cap.

Put some tape on the outside of the bottle cap to close it and use a lighter to melt the glue. Fill the inside of the bottle cap with the glue to close the hole you made with the wire. This is an important step, unless you want your float to absorb water through the hole.

A tip is to make several floats at the same time. Proceed through the steps and repeat and fill several bottle caps with epoxy at the same time. By doing it this way, you save some time, and you don't waste premixed epoxy.

Under stealthier conditions, like close to shore and in shallow water, you can easily use a clear bottle as well. Due to its size, it is quite easy to see. Most plastic bottle caps have standard threads, and you can use practically any bottle that fits the threads. Plastic bottles come in different sizes as well, and sometimes a smaller bottle is required. But under conditions where you are waiting for bites on your big bait rods, you need a highly visible float that keeps your attention the entire time. You do not want your float to get tangled in your other lines when a halibut takes your float rig. It is also worth considering spending all your energy on the float rod and exclude the rods in your tripod, because float fishing for halibut is time consuming and you are at the mercy of strong currents.

"The halibut has the unique ability to follow your bait for longer distances and is easily spotted from a distance if you are fishing over shallow waters or clean ground"

Float fishing for pollack is entertaining and a great time killer during long conger sessions

The steel wire will hold the swivel in place

Remember not to fill the cap completely, as you need the threads to attach the adaptor to the float

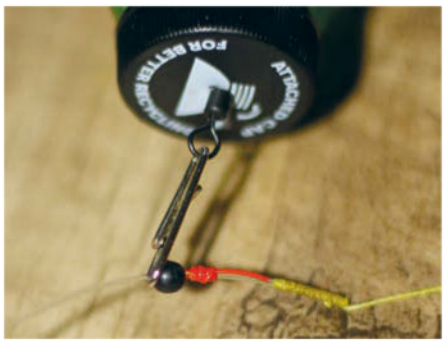
Making several floats at the same time saves time and effort

With just a few components it is easy to make a float rig

Cox & Rawle Mutsu – no compromise

A 100cm long hook length opts for control under the cast and when drifted over the bottom

A two-rod length of shock leader allows you to set the depth at approximately 9 meters, which is a great place to start



The float will bounce into the bead, which is held in place on the shock leader with a Power Gum knot

BUILDING A FLOAT RIG FOR HALIBUT

To make a halibut rig there is not much to it, and not much magic at all. Imagine you are making a float rig for most species and look at the halibut float rig as an upscaled version of what you would use for pollack, garfish and even bass. What I do need to stress here, is the use of good, quality line and terminal tackle; you might get hooked into at beast. The weakest link in your setup will be what results in the disaster of a lost fish!

An efficient float rig for halibut starts with just a few components. All you need is a good quality mono for the hook length, a three-way swivel, a hook, a quick-change link with a swivel as a float adaptor and a bead as a buffer. To complete the rig, you also need something to make stop knots to set the bait to fish at the correct depth. To this purpose I find no better material than Power Gum, as it digs into your line without damaging it. The benefit of using Power Gum over braid for the stop knot will become obvious, as the flexibility of the Power Gum allows you to move the stop knot without tightening it after. Setting the correct depth of the rig is crucial to be able to catch halibut. Once you move a knot made from braid, it will become loose and will fail to play the important part needed on the complete setup.

For casting purposes, I prefer to keep the hook length short, no more than approximately 100cm. The hook length is made from no less than 0.90mm (or 100lb) mono. The halibut has an impressive set of teeth and will cut you off if you go too light on your leader. I have found not too much difference in using fluorocarbon or mono, but use what you have faith in. My preferred hook is a Cox & Rawle Mutsu circle hook in 10/0. I will explain why I choose circle hooks later. At the end of your hook length, tie on a Cox & Rawle three-way swivel in the Beach-size. End the rig by clipping on a quick-change link in the horizontal eye of the three-way clip. This is where you attach your lead.

SETTING THE DEPTH

My standard shock leader length is two rod lengths, or roughly 9m. Determining where to put your stop knot is usually somewhere between the shock leader knot and the rig clip at the end of it. This could be anything from at 2m depth or the full length of the shock leader. This means when fishing over 10 to 15m of depth you can set the Power Gum stop knot to a couple of meters before the shock leader knot.

The knot can be moved up and down your shock leader by pinching it between your fingers and pulling it gently to the desired location. You can fish as deep as the mark requires. When fishing deeper than a full

shock leader length, you need to tie the Power Gum stop knot onto your braided main line. The deepest I have fished a float rig is approximately 90m when fishing pelagically for hake and ling, and I intend to go even deeper…

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

You will find halibut practically anywhere, but luckily there are some checks on the tick list to narrow down the search. I use both satellite images and depth charts tenaciously to find my marks, and one of the prime factors I want is moving water, as this takes care of the drift and the rig will fish on its own. I have succeeded best when float fishing in and around tidal currents and bottle necks in fjords.

The second thing you want are eddies and 'back pockets' where the baitfish will gather naturally – either to seek shelter or being pushed by the currents. From the boat, areas like these are easier to find thanks to sonars, when channels and boulders appear on the screen. For a shore angler, satellite images are a great way to find these back pockets, edges and changes in the water. All you have to do is zoom closely in and look for disturbance on the water and make a judgment when you add the information you get from the depth charts. Fishing for halibut is dead simple: find the baitfish, and you will find the halibut. Getting them to take the bait is the tricky part.

The third option is to look for clean ground or plateaus with easy access to deeper water. This is a good place for the halibut to lay an ambush on passing prey. Option number four is to float fish through a channel, like between the shore and an island. These areas will have moving water going back and forth depending on the tide.

HOW TO FISH THE FLOAT RIG AND A FEW TRICKS

The most effective way to fish the float rig is to use the current to naturally present the bait. A dead coalfish or herring drifting in the current is an easy snack and is hard to resist.

Gather up as much information from the mark as possible, such as depth, ground and terrain. This info is essential when you set the depth of the rig.

I want my bait to work 2 to 3m off the bottom. Although cod are pelagic hunters when they are feeding on coalfish, any closer presentation to the bottom seems to produce cod in too big of numbers and the halibut have no time to take the bait! This is where setting the depth with a Power Gum stop knot at the correct depth comes in handy. At this stage it is important to use your maps – both satellite images and depth charts. The things you learn from studying maps are amazing!

Pay attention to the float rig when you reel in to make a new cast. The sudden change of direction as well as gaining speed can be just what the halibut is looking for to induce a take. The halibut has the unique ability to follow your bait for longer distances and is easily spotted from a distance if you are fishing over shallow waters or clean ground. Speeding up or twitching with your rod tip can be the difference between a take and seeing the halibut turn 180 degrees.

It is a bit below my halibut PB, but a 32lb 6oz float fish PB still makes a great catch!

Although 500ml bottles will hold up 300g of lead but I prefer to underweight it greatly with no more than 100g of lead. The buoyancy of the float will make the rig work as a bolt-rig when using circle hooks.

SAME METHOD, OTHER SPECIES

As a fishing method, float fishing has its wide applicability. Here in Norway, I have successfully used floats to target species like turbot, brill and sea trout from the beaches. Here I take advantage of the tides and offshore wind together to work the float rig. A regular float will work, but a sail float will work even better.

On the beaches the food will always gather up in pockets behind sand bars and to locate these a float rig is the perfect method. The rig is downscaled from heavy halibut tackle to a float that can hold 50g, a 1.5m hook length made from 20lb fluorocarbon and a 4/0 hook baited with sandeel. When float fishing from the beaches I usually change the weight from a sinker to a lure to add some flash and because it is more suspending in the water than anything made from lead or pewter. A Dexter wedge is an excellent float weight for this application, but any wider lures will work well too. Here, I prefer to set the depth of the rig at twice as long as the depth to make the rig move freely on the bottom and let the float drag the bait on the seabed to make small clouds of sand to attract any inquisitive fish.

To register the bites from the large-mouthed flatfish species, you simply have to strike when the float stops on its drift. Mark out the location where the float stopped and cast up tide on the next cast. The seabed feature in the ground your float rig found is likely to hold more fish. Float fishing is the method to use when you want to play on the natural environment to your advantage. Winds can be an excellent partner in crime to help with working your float, especially when using a sail float.

A float rig can be used to catch a variety of species, in addition to the species mentioned earlier. Other typical species to target with a float rig are ballan wrasse, garfish, mackerel and pollack. I have also used float rigs to successfully target pelagic spurdogs over snaggy grounds. What about tope? Or a ray? It is a matter of setting the correct depth, choosing the correct bait and, of course, choosing the right conditions and marks. One of my most surprising catches on a float was a starry ray! ■

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Words and photography
JOE WALKER

MULLET MUNCHIES

Saltwater fly fishing expert **Joe Walker** explains all you need to know to get your reel screaming this summer with the adrenaline-fuelled action of catching mullet on the fly

Spring was slow getting out the traps this year, which makes for an anxious time for a saltwater angler like me. Watching the water temperatures, scanning local catch reports and wandering the shorelines becomes increasingly tense as I wait for the first tell-tail swirls and flashes that signal the arrival of that most enigmatic of our 'summer' shoreline species, mullet.

It's a special time for me because at this point in the year it seems like a lifetime since the last season's shoals dwindled and melted away in late October/early November, and their arrival for the new season fills me with excitement and gets me reaching for all my saltwater fly gear with a trembling hand. Why? Because mullet represent one of the best sporting experiences on UK shores, and there's no more gratifying a way to target them than with a fly rod.

I've been fishing for mullet with a fly rod for over 17 years now, and these cunning, wily and at times downright agonisingly frustrating fish still have the capability to take me to school on occasion. But bit by bit, catch by catch, that constant pursuit and endless accumulated hours of observation builds up a picture which resolves into a pattern, and with each passing season a little more of the mullet mystery gets unlocked.

Now I have a catch rate which (bearing in mind mullet are known in the saltwater fly fraternity as 'the fish of a thousand casts') I would simply not have thought credible 15 years ago. And I know a couple of mullet-on-the-fly gurus who have been at it even longer than me, and their catch rates blow my mind!

WHY OH WHY, MULLET ON THE FLY?

So what is it about targeting mullet with a fly rod that becomes such an obsession? It's two things really.

Firstly it's the light tackle sport element of it. I've waxed lyrical many times before about the virtues of UK saltwater flyfishing, and why (as a former bait and lure angler of 30 years) I would urge anyone fishing our shores to consider picking up a fly rod. There's a directness – a sense of contact – you get when playing a fish on a fly rod that you simply don't get with any other method. We've all picked up a rod when the tip's nodding slightly but you're not 100 per cent sure if it's a gentle bite or weed, right? Quite often you point the rod tip down the line and hold the line in your fingers to maximise the sensation of pull on the line; you can feel the slightest twitch far more easily. Well imagine that sense magnified a hundred-fold when a fish snatches the fly and lunges away, yanking the line through your fingers. And it gets better, because that feeling of connection doesn't become just a nodding weight as you lift the rod and start to retrieve your quarry; it stays vital and alive, every urgent turn, twist, head-jerk and run transmitted directly and perfectly through the fly line and down the super-light blank to your hands. After you've experienced this sensation with a flyrod, picking up even the lightest of lure kit makes the fish feel somehow muted and distant.

Of course, fly gear is supremely lightweight and the different 'weights' of rod and reel combo and be selected to provide the perfect balance between absolute maximum sport and being able to match the conditions too. Even a fizzing little mackerel can split your face into a manic grin with the right rod. Mullet, now… well they are the absolute king on a fly rod, whether it's a thin-lip leaping from the surf in alarm, a clutch-razzing, bottle-rocket run from a lithe golden grey or the drawn-out, arm-aching test of endurance that comes with wearing down a big thick-lip, all three of our mullet species provide epic sport on a fly rod. Add to that the thrill of the sight fishing element, spotting, stalking and casting directly at your quarry, and you have something pretty special.

The second reason for targeting mullet with a fly rod is, well, it works. It's a

technique that's proven its effectiveness countless times, consistently across all three species, and can be applied to any environment, from the calm, barely tidal upper reaches of an estuary to the endless crashing of open surf beaches. It works.

COVERING THE BASES

One of the big appeals with chasing mullet on the fly is they are arguably one of the most found species around our shores. Whilst commercial pressure on mullet stock is growing substantially, the fact is that stocks have not been subjected to the same sustained pressure over many decades that bass have. Specimen bass are hard to come by. But you're very likely to be able to clap eyes on a seriously big mullet, often on a regular basis. The other thing is that mullet are shallow water feeders, often right in the very margins, which makes them particularly accessible and perfect for the proximity world of fly fishing.

Estuaries make the ideal arena on which to cut your mullet-on-the-fly teeth. Thick-lipped and thin-lipped mullet are often abundant in this environment. Contrary to popular belief, mullet are resourceful and opportunistic feeders, and not the 'mud-suckers' they're often labelled as. Filtering organisms from mud certainly does form a good part of their diet, and sharp-eyed mulleteers will look for tell-tale signs of their feeding left on estuary mud banks over low tide, as it's a good indication of where the shoals gather. That activity helps the mullet root out a wide range of potential food stuffs; small marine worms, crustacea larvae, algae and so on.

Of course, shallow, accessible, and often sheltered, tidal flats on the edges of estuaries make for ideal flyfishing locations. As with any location, time observing is never time wasted. The mullet shoals will follow the tide in and out, feeding as the water covers their favourite banks on the flood, but also as receding waters create currents that sweep easy pickings towards their busy mouths. Often in estuaries you need to walk up with the advancing tide. Mullet often spill into pools or reach obstacles that form natural holding points. As the shoal density increases and feeding starts, so too does your window of opportunity. Eventually the shoal will move on, and you'll need to move with it – targeting mullet with a flyrod is never, ever a static affair! Estuaries are definitely a great

The Romy's sandshrimp

A variant of the Ray's Mullet Fly – or the 'Mullet Bach'– a classic

The Romy's Mudshrimp

Imitating mullet munchies

Shrimply red

"I've been fishing for mullet with a fly rod for over 17 years now, and these cunning, wily and at times downright agonisingly frustrating fish still have the capability to take me to school on occasion"

starting point. Mud can be a hazard, though, and needs to be treated with considerable care. Don't take chances – as one who's come close to getting stuck and has rescued others, let me tell you that no matter how tantalising the shoals may be, know when to back off. Don't take chances!

Estuaries are a great starting point but are far from the only place to go hunting for mullet sport with a fly rod. Natural harbours provide a similar environment and are an obvious target too; however, often mullet gather in large numbers outside the harbour entrances either side of low tide, spreading along open beaches. Feeding can occur in the waves, hard up against the shore, or concentrated in currents and rivers formed by water emptying from the harbour within. Again, time spent walking the shore with a good pair of polarising sunglasses will reveal their presence.

Rocky shorelines are less synonymous with mullet, but even there they can be found. It is not always so easy to target them with a fly in this environment though. Space for casting is a core requirement, so having your back against a cliff is largely going to exclude a venue like that. More open rocky shores, like those I used to fish in Dorset though; well, they are definitely worth exploring. An established technique on beaches where kelp gets washed up and rots is to kick the mounds of weed over right where the waves meet the shore. Seaweed flies lay millions of eggs in the salty compost and kicking it into the water releases masses of small fly larvae into the waves. Mullet being mullet are happy to take full advantage of the free protein and will gorge on them. Any fly pattern vaguely resembling the maggots will be taken with gusto!

Finally, there's possibly the most unlikely of environments to venture onto with a fly rod: surf beaches. These great sweeping expanses of seemingly featureless sand, pounded and scrubbed by relentless crashing water, would at first glance seem a pretty unlikely venue to attempt to catch mullet from. However, as anyone who bait fishes them regularly will tell you, there's plenty of mullet action going on in those wide, flat tables of water pushing up the beach after the waves have broken. It's flat, shallow, there can be masses of busy fish and more casting space than you can shake… well… a fly rod at! Of all the environments to target mullet in, this is the one I love the most. Watching mullet line up in formation inside a wave and ride it in is mesmerising. The excitement of putting a fly into the water tables among the dark shapes of the fish urgently hoovering up morsels before the water retreats, never abates. Golden greys and thin-lips both love the surf.

Shrimply red is a great early season pattern

THE BUSINESS END

As I've already explained, mullet are far from being mud-suckers. Neither do you have to fish flies that look like algae, or even bread, though you can if you want to. Most mullet flies represent a part of the mullet's diet that they're particularly keen on: shrimp.

The fact of the matter is that although reputed to be incredibly fussy, mullet are, in fact, not particularly choosy when it comes to fly patterns. The range of flies that mullet will take is pretty varied, but they all have a vague

'shrimpiness' about them. It's fair to say, though, that some are more effective than others and many are variations on a theme. Let's take a look at the top patterns in my fly box:

MULLET BACH (AKA RAY'S MULLET FLY)

This simple fly is a pattern you should always carry. It's one of the earliest widely adopted mullet fly patterns and will tempt all three species. On its day, it seems hard for the mullet to resist. There are a few variations on a theme – I tie a blue version and a tan version too. The tan version has also caught some nice bass!

ROMY'S SANDSHRIMP ('TAGGED')

The classic mullet shrimp from mullet fly maestro Colin Macleod. The Romy's Sandshrimp is a proven pattern that I fish almost all the time. 'Tagged' refers to the addition of a short tag of red floss or wool added to the fly. There are various theories on why mullet seem to find the flash of red extra appealing, but the simple fact is it definitely makes a difference. Given that most fly anglers target mullet using two flies, one mounted at the end of the leader (on the 'point') and another about a metre up on a short, knotted, offshoot of line (called a 'dropper'), that means you can fish two patterns at once to maximise chances. The Romy's Sandshrimp is often my staple 'dropper' fly, a permanent fixture on my leader whilst I swap out the point fly to ring the changes. Golden greys and thin-lips love this pattern when fished over a pale sandy bottom.

ROMY'S MUDSHRIMP (TAGGED)

Essentially a dark green/brown version of the above, the Romy's Mudshrimp is particularly effective for thick-lipped mullet when fished over mud and muddy gravel peppered with bladderwrack. It follows a basic rule in harbours and estuaries of fishing the lights coloured patterns over a light bottom and darker patterns over a darker bottom. Simple stuff, but there's a degree of sense in it as the shrimp themselves adapt to the colour of their surroundings.

GHOSTBUSTER

The foam back on this fly gives it a degree of buoyancy, either allowing it to sit in the surface film or hover in the water. It's a fly which is an excellent choice in shallow water where thick-lips can be seen grubbing around amongst the week and mooring chains of your local harbour. It can be fished on the point with a Romy's on the dropper (fishing a buoyant fly on the end to suspend a second fly above it is something known in fly fishing parlance as 'washing line style'), or it can be fished on the dropper, using it almost like a float indicator as well as a fly in its own right.

SHRIMPLY RED

If red's known to work, why not go all-in, right? The Shrimply Red plays heavily on that trait. Strangely enough it's a pattern that seems to work extremely well until the end of June, but then starts to lose its effectiveness. Worth having for the first half of the season when the thin-lips mass in the natural harbours though.

DAZ'S GREEN SHRIMP

A dark green and tan variant created by another mullet impresario, Darren Jackson. Up here on the waters of South Wales, this pattern has proven absolutely devastating when the fish have switched on. Equally productive for thin-lips and golden greys, both in the estuaries and open beaches; it's my current favourite.

FLIES AREN'T THE MAGIC SOLUTION

As pursuing mullet on the fly continues to gain in popularity, so the patterns of flies available continues to grow. There are rarely any unique patterns – flies tend to 'evolve' as patterns are refined, tweaked and mixed up, so there's always something new to try.

But the real key to mullet success on the flyrod is not what fly pattern you fish. More important to unlocking the thrills of 'mulleteering' is recognising the behaviour that signals when mullet are actually coming on the feed, Once they're switched on, particularly in a competitively feeding shoal, much of their famed caution goes to the wind. Many a disenfranchised aspiring mullet-on-the-fly angler has trudged off the beach disheartened because four hours of throwing flies in front of innumerable fish hasn't got so much as a sniff. Quite often that's because those fish were in a steady procession, intently heading from A to B. It's very rare indeed to get a take when they're on a mission. The trick is to try and find out where B actually is and intercept them where they stop moving and literally get their heads down.

It takes a little time and patience to build that map of their routes and begin to see the subtle differences in the way they swim and behave. However, the investment in time is totally worth it. Once you know what you're looking for, you can begin to predict where and when the fish will be in the mood, and that will increase your chances exponentially.

At a time when many of us slightly older anglers can quite easily get lured into morosely nursing a pint and reminiscing about how much better the bass or cod fishing was 30 years ago, mullet offer a real antidote. Exciting, tough, worthy adversaries, they'll still have you gnawing the cork off your rod handle in frustration at times but pick up a fly rod and stick with it. The pay-off is huge! ■

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Words and photography
BEN BASSETT

PRETTY IN PINK

Get off the sofa and into a Couch's! Ultra-light tackle lure specialist Ben Bassett explains how to target these feisty summer visitors

Wearing dazzling blues, reds and pinks, the Couch's bream is one of the prettiest fish in our waters. They are also becoming an increasingly common catch for bait and LRF anglers in the UK, especially on the South Coast. This is my guide to making the most of this on ultralight tackle.

Couch's bream, or red porgy – scientific name, Pagrus pagrus – is a sea bream common around the eastern Atlantic from the Canary Islands to the UK. It was first discovered in our waters by the Cornish naturalist Jonathan Couch, which is where it gets its English name. Cornish anglers often pronounce it 'Cooches bream', but even though I am Cornish myself, I have always pronounced it 'Couch' like a sofa. However, both are accepted and understood in the angling community.

Couch's are very distinctive from gilthead or black bream as they are pink and blue in colour, but could be mistaken for the blackspot sea bream, otherwise known as the red sea bream. Blackspots are also pink in colour but have larger eyes that are closer to their snout, a slimmer body and lack the blue spots and stripes that Couch's have. There are other, more similar, species but they are very rare around our shores.

Unlike their gilthead cousins, we rarely see specimen adult sized Couch's bream inshore. This species prefers to move into deep water once it grows past the one-to-two-pound mark, making specimen Couch's almost a purely boat angling target. Fortunately, though, the young fish school up around our coasts and in our estuaries in large numbers and are a bright and aggressive addition to our usual light game species. ▶

Using ultralight tackle, we can get the most from these younger, jewel-like fish, but picking your spots, lures and tackle correctly makes a big difference.

TACKLE

As most inshore Couch's are no more than half a pound in weight, you can get away with using very light lines, fine rods and small rods. These are hard fighting fish, but often aren't large enough to snap you off unless you haven't set your drag properly. Therefore, choose a rod with a casting weight of no more than 10g, a 1000 size reel and braided or polyester line with a breaking strain of no more than 8lb (much less if you are using polyester lines).

The Japanese have a dedicated rod style for their bream, called Kurodai. If you see a rod with this name it will be a regular style rod, bending right through the rod. This is to absorb the frantic, powerful fight of the bream, unlike the much faster Aji style which is by far the most popular LRF rod style in the UK. The majority of my light rock fishing is done with ultra-fast action Aji rods, and I have found them to be perfectly usable for targeting bream. That said, I have no doubt that a more regular actioned rod would be even better for them. My point being that you don't need to worry too much, but the more thought you put into it, the more you get out.

It's important you have high quality hooks. Bream have hard mouths with blunt teeth; strong sharp hooks are crucial. Don't ignore when hooks have blunted or worn; keep them sharp and you will benefit in your catch rates.

LURES

Small Couch's, like juvenile gilthead and black bream, are voracious hunters and target a wide range of prey. In my experience I have found gilts and blacks to be more attracted to grazing and picking on crustaceans, molluscs and worms, whereas Couch's seem to be much more active fish hunters. These little pink rockets smash into shoals of sandeels and sprats with their blunt heads. So in order to target them, the best lures will be small fish imitations, although worm and crustacean patterns will also be effective.

My two most successful lures for Couch's bream are the Ecogear Aqua Shirasu and small metal jigs. The Shirasu is a biodegradable lure loaded with scent, with a small ball tail. It imitates a tiny fish or worm and can be rigged on a dropshot or jighead for the best effect. Small metal jigs are exactly that. I like mine to have an assist hook on the head end, as I find Couch's bream tend to smack into the 'head' of the lure to stun it, and with an assist hook this can greatly aid hook-ups. I have caught bream on tiny 1.5g jigs up to the more usual 7-8g jigs. Colour choice doesn't seem to matter too much, but as I find Couch's often come on the feed as the sun begins to set, a little glow is often an excellent trigger. It certainly boosts my confidence anyway.

You can even combine these two choices, adding a short length of fluorocarbon to a metal jig, then baiting the hook with an Ecogear Shirasu or similar lure. You get a similar effect to the traditional 'baited spoon'.

TECHNIQUE

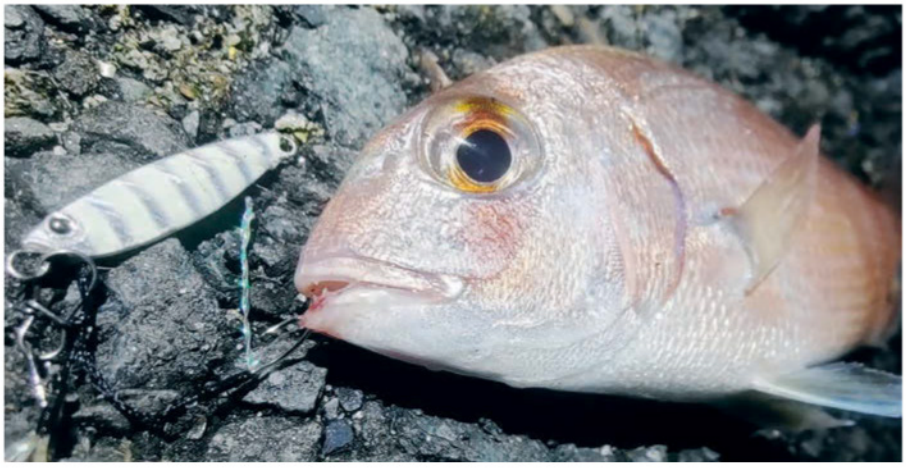
In my experience, Couch's don't chase the lure far. You rarely get one follow a lure like a bass would over distance. They also like to stick near the bottom or ambush from behind structure. So, with any style of lure, you need to work around those areas and try to keep the lure in the strike zone for as long as possible. You can achieve this by using lots of lifts and falls; this is often called 'On The Drop' or OTD for short. Try not to reel in too much; use the rod to flick the lure up and then let it flutter down, either to the bottom or close to it. If you are using a Carolina or dropshot rig then you can fish much slower, but still aim to impart movement with twitches and lots of pauses.

LOCATION

Young Couch's will often fatten up in the rich, fast-moving waters of tidal estuaries and inlets. They don't push up as far as giltheads do, but certainly can be found on similar ground. I have also found them to be plentiful around sand bars and beaches, especially those that are flanked by rocky gulleys, sea grass or kelp. In Plymouth, where I am based, we even catch them in the harbour and from Mount Batten Breakwater. Like many bream species they often follow a pattern on each tide, which may only last for a few days, but can be taken advantage of when discovered. Try to mentally log the state of tide for your location when you catch, as it can be replicated in the following days.

TIMING

I prefer dusk to catch Couch's bream, but I know they are active feeders during the day too, in the right conditions. There is something about the lower light conditions, though, that makes them far more willing to attack a lure, even into complete darkness. As many marks these days are teeming with paddleboarders, boaters and swimmers, waiting until dusk and darkness can also be a great way to avoid the crowds too. I have even caught Couch's in the pitch black; they clearly feed when the opportunity arises.



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

All of these elements combined when I had a joyous LRF bream session on a late spring evening, casting from a Cornish harbour wall onto golden sand as the sun set.

I was joined by Britain's oldest Lerfer, Maurice Mitchinton, who was well into his seventies and still climbing up harbour granite better than many half his age. We had chosen the mark in the hope of bream, be that black or Couch's. The sandy bay in front of us was flanked by two rocky reefs, perfect hunting ground for our target species. Of course, other species could turn up too, and we would be happy with any.

We both set up with snooded dropshot rigs, baited with Ecogear Aqua Shirasu, mine in a natural pink, and Maurice's in his favourite bream colour, orange. Our aim was to cast out and search the ground, slowly twitching our lures inches above the sand. It started slow but then the sun began to set. With our nearest star staring at us from across the bay like a deep red eye, the bites arrived like magic. Small pecks at first, but lots of them. The tell-tale signs of black bream, with their small mouths perfectly evolved to strip a hook in seconds. I soon caught one, only a juvenile but spirited in the fight, and Maurice followed mine up with another.

We continued to tease the black bream, often losing them at the wall or missing the staccato style bites. Our main target was soon to make its arrival known though, and Maurice let out an excited yelp, whipping his rod round to strike a far firmer bite. This was better, cartwheeling around in the deep blue below us, soon revealing itself in a flash of precious pink. It was a Couch's. Again, only a modest fish, but to us this was perfection, made somehow even better by the blue accents and spots that adorned its body and head. There are few UK species that can come close to the Couch's bream, especially when targeted on ultralight tackle.

I felt confident that my turn was soon to come, knowing these pink predators would surely be stalking the sand in loose shoals. I made another cast in the warmth of the evening sun, braided line shimmering as it sank beneath the blue. I love these moments; the tension builds as you know any second the line is going to tighten, and the rod tip will bounce. I used the rod to impart a bit of life to the scented lure, twitching it then pausing, repeating this again and again until I was stopped. My target had found me and was now zipping away to the rocks on my left. From high above and with a reel loaded with six-pound rated braid, I wasn't going to let that happen, and the fish was turned swiftly towards me.

I soon had my prize, a marvel in magenta. This Couch's had bright cobalt stripes under the eye, looking like an enthusiastic teenage girl who had just discovered blue eyeshadow. If you compared this fish to our regular UK species, the pollack, whiting, even many ballan wrasse, the colours were in a different league. Couch's simply look tropical, and holding one on a warm spring evening further entrenched that feeling that I could be somewhere much closer to the Equator. As with all my bream, I enjoyed watching the fish disappear into the deep as much as I enjoyed catching it. It was all going to plan.

We carried on well into dark, with more Couch's and black bream falling to a mixture of lures. Like many LRF sessions, we also found bass, mackerel and wrasse. Nothing huge, but on balanced tackle they didn't need to be, we could simply marvel in their fight and beauty. It's something that with a bit of luck and determination we can all experience, and I hope I have provided some inspiration to try going ultralight for these remarkable bream. ■

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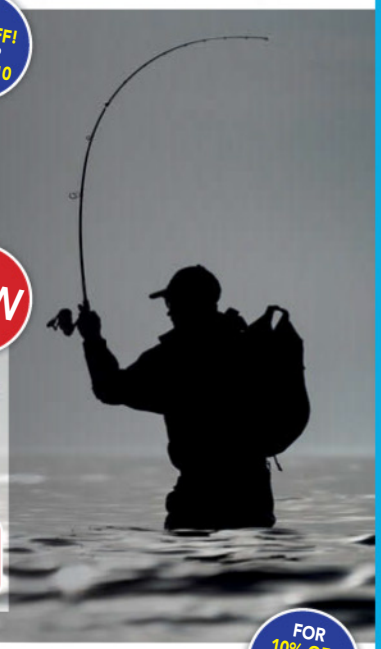

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16g	23g	32g	42g

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16lb	19lb	24lb	30lb

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12-42g	12-42g	12-42g

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10cm	13cm	14cm	15cm
12g	22g	32g	42g

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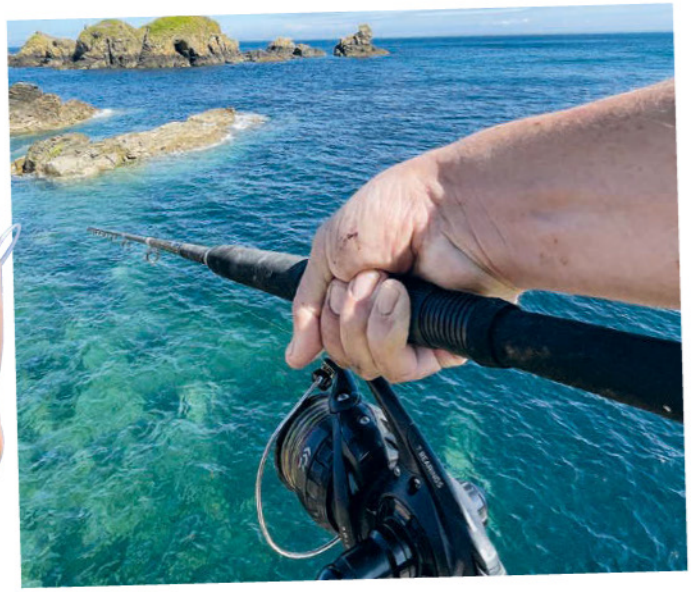
Words and photography by CHRIS KENNEDY

THE FRILL OF GIANT BALLANS

Sark-based specimen hunter Chris Kennedy explains the story of how he smashed his ballan wrasse PB with an unusual bait they just couldn't resist



The unmistakable sensation of the thump, thump, thump of a ballan wrasse smashing my baits and burrowing hard, once hooked, still gets me just as excited now as it did as an eight or nine-year-old. Wrasse are majestic creatures, the UK's closest thing to a tropical fish, with their vibrant colours and distinct markings. Almost every one of them makes you marvel at nature's design. They really are so photogenic.

I was captivated by them as a child as I spent the afternoons fishing from the rocks on the island of Herm in the Channel Islands with my brother and father in the late 1980s. We'd go every summer for a week or 10 days. The memories are as vivid as ever, and I'd give anything to go back to that age now, with my father in his prime, learning from him; we were living every moment.

The trend is familiar: new personal best fish are easy back when you start off, and they get increasingly more difficult as you gain experience and spend hundreds, or even thousands, of hours chasing the dream fish on your mental list of new PBs. The British shore record for a ballan wrasse is 9lb 1oz, caught from Portland in Dorset, by Pete Hegg, a chap I had the pleasure of chatting to and fishing next to a few years back while targeting blonde and undulate rays from a Purbeck coastline rock mark. For a long time, my best ballan was an unweighed fish, guesstimated at 5-6lb, caught on a Sidewinder Skerries Eel from a spot at the north end of Sark, back on a visiting trip in 2018. Unfortunately, the battery in my Berkley scales had died, so I couldn't weigh it. Ever since then I have carried two sets of scales, just in case, and I always check the battery levels. Aside from that I have had some lovely fish in the 4-5lb range, and plenty of 3lb-plus fish.

I love targeting them with soft plastic lures, like the Fiiish Black Minnow. The conventional wisdom is that the biggest wrasse mostly come on bait, typically things like peeler crab or hardbacks. I have done well on frozen or fresh blacks. Razor clam has worked well too, and just lately I have been using fresh scallop frills. Ragworm, blow lug and lures mostly bring me a lesser stamp of fish. Of course, there are exceptions when fish are hungry and they'll take what is on offer to sustain themselves. It's worth remembering that ballan wrasse have an immense set of powerful teeth and strong jaws, ideal for crushing crabs and juvenile shellfish like mussels, clams, limpets and so on. I often hear that wrasse attack lures because they are territorial, and the lures infringe on their space, though I have not confirmed this with any marine biologists. Black bream also do something similar when protecting their nest of eggs and will chase off other predators.

SCALLOPING

Where I live on Sark, it's very difficult to source crab as bait. I have no idea why collecting it is so hard; the neighbouring islands have tons available at low tide that are very easy to find. Despite Sark having tons of lobster, edible brown crabs and spider scrabs, smaller crabs are very hard to get hold of. This may be due to the large influx of bream each year and the juveniles being wiped out. We also have very little worm available to dig. Just lately I have been helping out a friend while he dives for scallops and sells them. I drive the boat and wait for him to surface. He lets me have the parts of the scallops that are not edible: the frills and the little black digestion sack. These scallop frills are ideal for targeting larger bream in late summer or early autumn or, as I am discovering, the larger wrasse which love feeding on them. When returning in the small tender, I started fishing from the harbour walls, searching for some lunker wrasse, with great results.

I'd taken to using a simple paternoster rig with a 3oz lead, a size 1/0 or 2/0 Mustad

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Chinnu hook, and 25lb fluorocarbon hook lengths. I had been picking up lots of two- and three-pound fish. One day, in bright sunshine, about halfway through the flood, as soon as my juicy scallop baits hit the water, they were getting absolutely smashed; the wrasse were on the feed in a way that I have never encountered before. I was casting just next to a rocky reef in a channel between it and some thick kelp. My rod would immediately arch over and heavy thumps would begin. I can't describe the heart-pounding exhilaration, or the chaos, that ensued for around an hour as I rushed along the harbour wall with a sheer drop on either side, grabbing my drop net, unhooking, weighing, photographing, releasing fish, rebaiting and occasionally having words of encouragement from the islanders working on the boats behind me, and my pal, Aaron Leamen, who was still gutting the scallops and leaving the entrails for me. It was absolutely insane fishing, nothing like anything I have experienced while wrassing.

MONSTER WRASSE

Most of the fish were magnificent looking, but one stood out above all others, it just felt so heavy as it dived and fought. It was briefly stuck and then began thrashing again. When I saw it surface the only words I could find were "my god, look at the size of that!". This orange and green monster with vivid sky blue polka dots on its dorsal fin was floundering in the afternoon sun, not before one last dive as I sorted the drop net. I stood some 20 feet up, it was hard to tell the size, but as soon as I got it up on the top of the wall, I knew it was a PB.

The scales took time to settle as the lively monster thrashed, but I had that new personal best that I'd been chasing, 6lb 4oz. I had a beaming smile as I called out to the lads. I quickly photographed and released it. My heart was in my mouth as it struggled briefly in the water before it turned powerfully and darted off back to its subaquatic kingdom to hopefully grow a few more pounds before I next encountered it.

The fishing eventually slowed, with my final tally being 10 wrasse: 4lb 3oz, 6lb 4oz, 4lb 6oz, 3lb 7oz and a bunch of 2lb-pus fish. It was incredible. Naturally, being a dreamer, I went back the following day, expecting or hoping that I'd experience a similar session. I mean, how could I not return the following day? I spent the morning with my imagination running wild and wondering if even larger fish existed; surely, they must? I thought. Seldom have I ever found a mark to fish on two consecutive days, but it always leaves your dreams dashed. I did have a good session, with fish of 2lb 10z, 2lb 15oz and 3lb 1oz, but no real giants turned up, and the fishing was much slower.

I had been spoilt by some of the best fishing that wrasse has to offer, and still, I wanted more, like someone with an addiction. I guess that's the beauty of sea angling; no matter what we catch, there will always be more fish to chase. Expectations will rarely match the reality, but we'll keep trying to smash PBs and experience those incredible highs when a plan comes together, and the sea gives us what we dreamed of, at least for the briefest of moments. I guess for me, the 7lb barrier is my next target. The unanswerable question is: will it take me years to surpass my last PB, or if it will happen much sooner? ■

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Words and Photography by MIKE THRUSSELL

TOP TARGETS FOR

SEPTEMBER 2024

This month tide master Mike selects the top tides and tactics for float fishing for big bass and surf fishing for small eyed rays

FLOAT FISH FOR BOAT BASS

The better numbers of mackerel nowadays tend to show post August in many areas. Consequently, September has become a top month to target boat bass with float tackle and mackerel baits. There's an excellent chance of larger than average bass, too.

TIDE TALK

The bass are found over inshore reefs, shallower rough ground and sandbanks close to estuary mouths, and they like some tide run. The declining tides from the 3rd to the 9th could see average fishing, but the better tides are the building tides as this brings numbers of bass inshore. These fall from the 14th to the 19th, though those on the 18th and 19th are massive and usually see shorter feeding periods. Also fish the smaller falling tides from the 22nd to the 24th, though catches will decline quickly as the tides decrease. The next opportunity falls from the 28th to the 30th.

In all cases, the bass feed best during the tide run. Concentrate on the second and third hour of the flood, expecting catches to ease away quickly during the fourth hour. On reefs and banks, the ebb tide can fish okay too, but generally this is a flood tide tactic, and more so on shallow inshore ground. The bass ambush the mackerel and sandeel from below, so look for a depth of 10ft or more for optimum catches. An early morning flood tide, or later in the evening, with some light to moderate cloud cover and a gentle onshore wind is perfect.

TACTICS

Fish 3oz rated 10ft spinning rods matched to a 4000/5000 fixed spool loaded with 20lb braid and a short 20lb fluorocarbon leader. On to the leader, slide on a 5mm bead, a cigar float, a 1 to 2oz ball-weight, another 5mm bead, then tie on a size 4 swivel. Add 24-inches of 20lb fluorocarbon to the swivel and a size 3/0 hook. Above the top bead, use a 5-turn Grinner knot over the leader to form a sliding stop knot to adjust the height of the float above the bait.

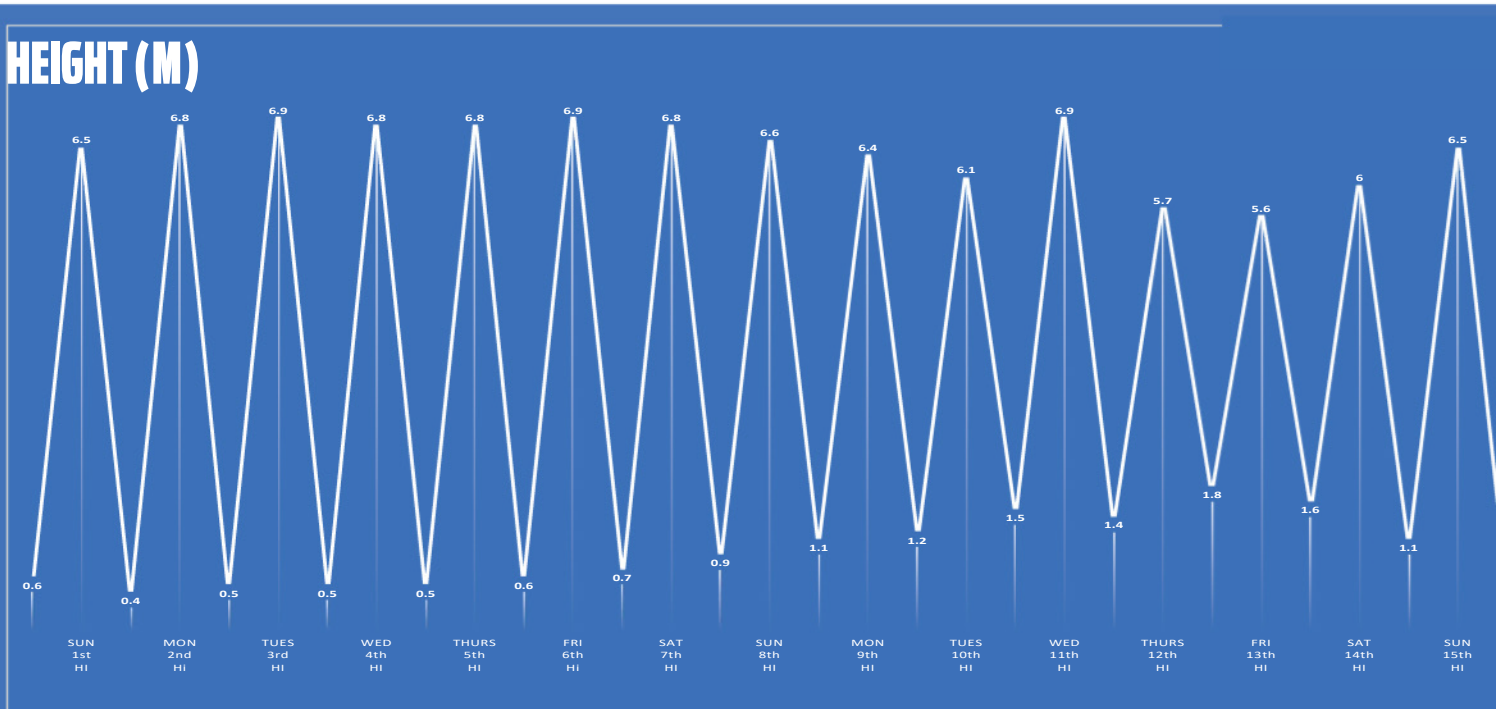
Top baits are whole small mackerel or pollack up to 8-inches long with the hook through the upper lip or through the nose. Go bigger and you'll get an increase in aborted takes. At a pinch a mackerel fillet hooked once through the thin end also works but move the float occasionally to lift and drop the bait in the tide. Sandeel is another good bait.

HOTSPOTS

English Channel reefs and sand banks. Reef ground in Cardigan Bay and Anglesey. Reef ground and banks off Wexford, Waterford and Cork in Ireland.

OTHER POSSIBLE SPECIES

Pollack, chance of tope.



SURF SMALL-EYED RAY

Arguably the best month for surf beach small-eyed ray and likely to produce the biggest fish. Unlike the other rays they come within a few yards of the surf line and are not afraid of shallow water.

TIDE TALK

Small-eyed's favour the bigger tides increasing in size. These occur from the 15th to the 19th and include two of the biggest tides of the year on the 18th and 19th. As the tides decrease from the 20th to the 23rd, rays may still be caught but their numbers do reduce quickly. The next tides fall on the 28th to 30th and being slower builders offer the best chance of a notable return. They can be taken in daylight, though the best catches occur in the dark during the 2nd and 3rd hours of the flood tide. Odd fish can be taken later to high water, but they generally retreat quickly once the tide starts to ebb, but a long cast can still locate the odd ray as it drops back to deeper water. On the flood, the smaller fish can be just 30-yards from the surf line but expect the bigger rays to be 50-yards or more out but in the deeper water just rearwards of the middle range surf breakers. Fish near small streams and patches of rougher ground too.

A moderate onshore wind is ideal with medium breakers, and they'll tolerate some colour in the water. They can tolerate rough seas, but the fish will be out in deeper water so casting distance can be important.

TACTICS

A 4-6oz 12 to 14ft Beachcaster with a multiplier holding 20lb line and 60lb shock leader covers everything, as will the same rods with a fixed spool reel, 30lb braid and 80lb braid shock leader.

Use a pulley rig made from 60lb mono with a 30lb fluorocarbon hook length and size 1/0 to 3/0 Viking pattern hook. Stick to frozen sandeel baits about 3-inches long binding two smaller eels together with bait elastic or use a body section from a bigger launce sandeel.

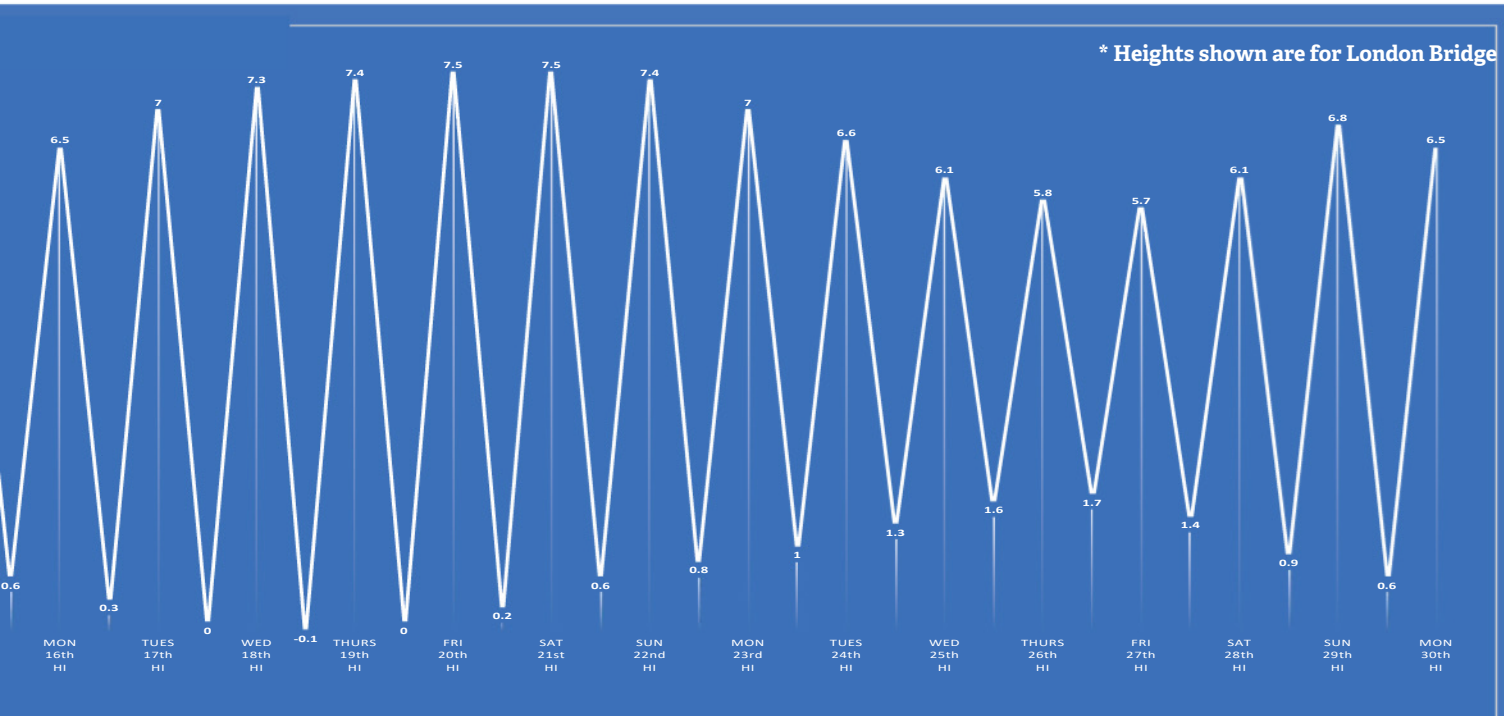
Try tipping the sandeel with a tiny square of mackerel for greater effectiveness. Other baits are a fresh pout fillet or whole small squid. If crabs and shrimps are quickly stripping soft sandeel baits, put the sandeel chunks inside the body of a squid without the head and secure with bait elastic. The crabs take longer to penetrate the squid giving the rays chance to find the bait.

HOTSPOTS

Dorset coast, Devon and Cornwall. Bristol Channel beaches. Cardigan Bay and Anglesey. Wexford, Waterford, Cork and Kerry beaches in Ireland.

OTHER POSSIBLE SPECIES

Thornback, spotted ray, huss, bass.



Words
SIMON SMITH

Tales from the tideline

THE ANGLER'S EGO

Simon Smith explores how anglers' fragile sense of self esteem can be a source of conflict or be used for good, all depending on how it is harnessed

For almost for as long as angling has existed, the concept of the 'angler's ego' has been a source of ironic comedy for others. On the darkest of angling days, when all hope and expectation have been shattered by a blank session or the sudden loss of a decent fish, when pride is dented and all there seems left to do is quietly lick our wounds, sulk and rage at the unfairness of the entire universe, how many of us have then had friends and family laughingly crack jokes about the one that got away, or light-heartedly call into question our angling abilities?

In such situations, the angling ego can seem the most fragile of creatures, particularly in the fact that it is so easily damaged. Anglers often find it difficult to, as Kipling suggested, "meet with triumph and disaster/and treat those two imposters just the same", for the angler is a creature of extremes. When the preparation is all geared in the right direction, when everything clicks and the hunch pays off, the ego is fed and nurtured, expanding like a balloon and lifting the angler along with it to the giddiest of emotional heights.

However, when things "gang aft agley", to quote another great poet, the ego of the angler is exposed for what it can often be – a delicate and crystalline object that seems to shrink and retreat into itself, at risk of shattering at any given moment. When all that planning and all the certainty flies out of the window, it takes with it every last shred of self-belief. This angler's ego can become a wayward creature, and there are times when it needs regular feeding. Sometimes acting of its own volition despite everything we know better, the ego will become the Photoshop of memory, adding the extra inch or six ounces to the retelling of the capture, holding the three-pounder just that bit closer to the camera in search of that small moment of acclaim. Magazine catch reports and internet forums are filled with such moments and, hey, who am I to judge? I have been guilty of it myself in the past as has, I suspect, a large section of the angling community. We're all human at the end of the day, and each of us has that little ego burning away inside us which, despite our best intentions, during these lapses feeds into that outside perception of the angler as a comic figure, with ever widening hand span and the comment "Honestly, it was this big!"

Speaking of online forums, on anything from close seasons to minimum sizes, sea fishing licenses and even membership of national representative bodies, visit any online chat area and you will discover a wide range of opinions, many of them contrasting. In such cases, you will also find the ego

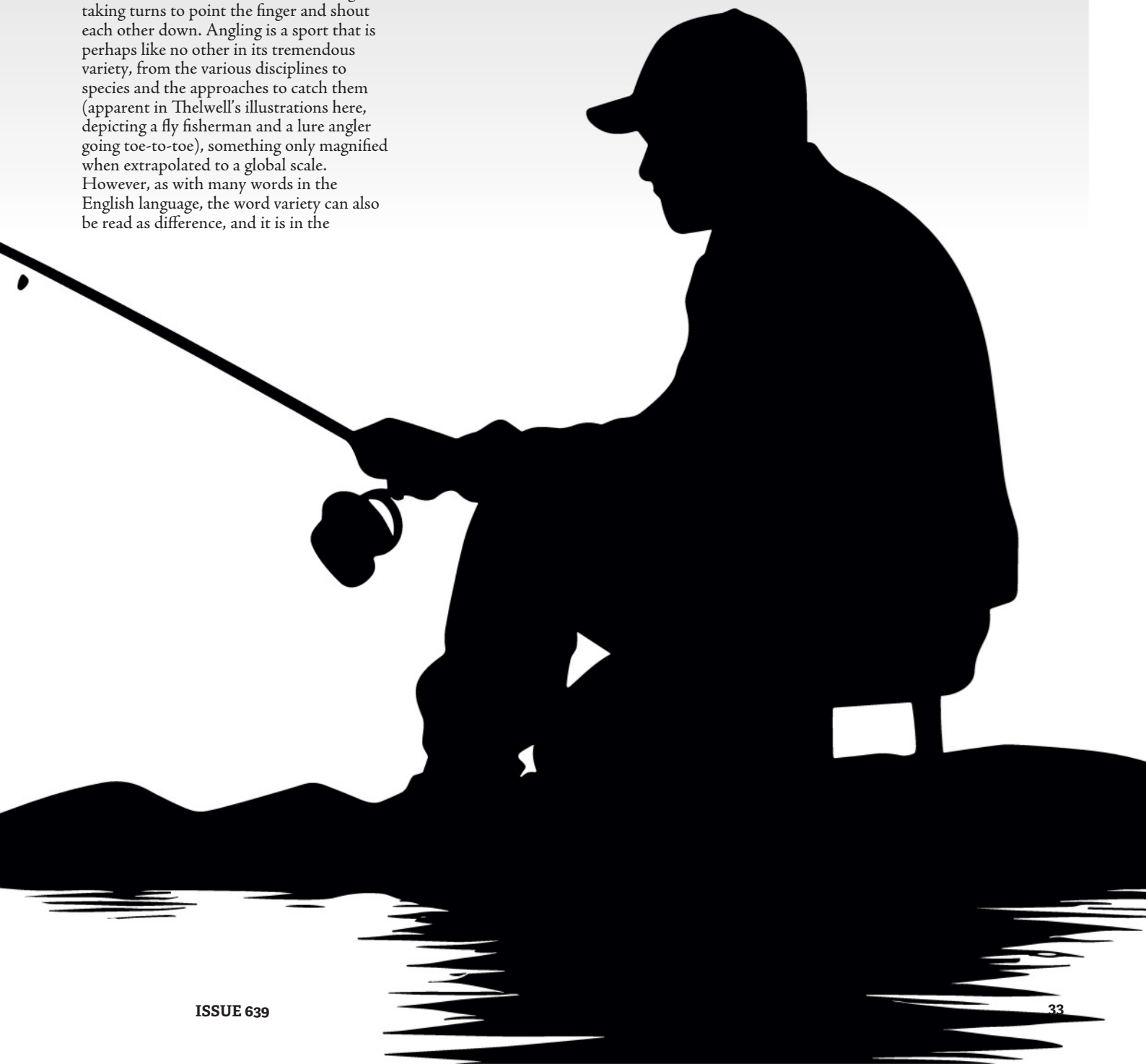
bursting out and opinions clashing in that arena where discussion turns to debate and debate quickly becomes argument, a difference only exacerbated by the absence of face-to-face contact. The internet is not to blame for this, though, as it's a tale as old as time itself.

In his classic book of fishing cartoons, The Compleat Tangler, that great chronicler of angling mishaps, Norman Thelwell, pre-empts the existence of online forums when he advises us to "be prepared to listen to the opinions of other anglers… and to give them the benefit of your own experience in return", and this sounds like a perfectly reasonable exchange, right? When the reader looks down, however, and considers the illustrations, the reality behind these statements becomes clear, with two anglers taking turns to point the finger and shout each other down. Angling is a sport that is perhaps like no other in its tremendous variety, from the various disciplines to species and the approaches to catch them (apparent in Thelwell's illustrations here, depicting a fly fisherman and a lure angler going toe-to-toe), something only magnified when extrapolated to a global scale. However, as with many words in the English language, the word variety can also be read as difference, and it is in the differences that the ego also rears its head.

Fish can be caught using the most basic and inexpensive of tackle, yet there are those who make it their life's mission to push the boundaries and make fishing rods and reels the very best they can be, utilising modern technologies and materials to push tackle design to ever-new heights. Ego did that. Fish can often be caught at the angler's feet, and yet at some point, one person decided they wanted to catch more fish, to catch those fishes further out as well as closer in, driving their casts further and further toward the horizon every time. Ego did that too. The basic paternoster has probably caught more fish than any other rig in history, yet at various points there have been those who played around with line, hooks and links, reconfigured the fishing rig in so many different ways to find more efficient ways of catching fish in different situations and places. Yep, you guessed it – ego.

You see, ego is not just some negative bane in our angling lives, but is also the driving force that pushes some onto the dangerous rock ledge, remote sand spit or uncharted small lake in search of the newest, the undiscovered and the uncharted. The angling ego can be the source of creation and innovation as much as it is a hindrance; the key is how we control and use it.

To see the angler's ego at its very best, however, we need only to step out onto the bankside or the beach, where angling really belongs, allowing the angler to inhabit their environment where, to quote Thelwell once



more, "unselfish by nature – he delights to show the novice where the big chub cruise… and where the best pike lie", and here we see the angler's ego as defined by the Freudian definition.

In Freud's thinking, the ego is actually the function that regulates us all, causing us to recognise that we cannot simply throw ourselves with wild abandon into what we wish to do, whenever we wish to do it. It makes us delay our gratification and impose boundaries as opposed to the id, the function that would have us focus only upon fulfilling our desires and wants. Of course, we would all love to spend the entirety of each and every day on the beach or boat, but if this were the case, angling would die on its feet. No one would have time to teach anyone else, none of us could function and we would all slide into the selfishness and solitariness of that oft-represented solo angler.

So many members of the angling fraternity give their time back to the sport that has given so much to them: match stewards, coaches, writers, club members… the list goes on and on, so much of their actions unheralded and behind the scenes, yet allowing our sport to flourish and grow in so many different, complex and interesting ways. The casual onlooker never sees any of this; they simply see a symbol of what they think angling is.

So next time you're out fishing and some passing member of the general public looks at you with pity as though you are simply an idiot standing in the rain, waving a stick at some water, remember there, back in the shadows, your angling ego in its truest, most positive sense, the thing that led you to the beach in the first place; give the onlooker a smile, spread your arms wide and tell them: "Yep, it was this big". ■

So many members of the angling fraternity give their time back to the sport that has given so much to them: match stewards, coaches, writers, club members…the list goes on and on, so much of their actions unheralded and behind the scenes, yet allowing our sport to flourish and grow in so many different, complex and interesting ways

THE GRAN CANARIA DEEP SEA FISHING INTERNATIONAL OPEN

CONSOLIDATES ITSELF AMONG THE ELITE

The next edition will take place between August 29 and 31 and celebrates the 35th test since the birth of its embryo and precedent, the Pasito Blanco Deep Sea Fishing Contest

The seabed of Gran Canaria has the largest specimens of Atlantic Blue Marlin, reaching 500 kilos in weight.

When you embark on Gran Canaria, as the popular saying goes, all problems stay on land. On board, the recipe is simple and has guaranteed elements: the best climate in the world, a tourist infrastructure of true luxury, a friendly and family atmosphere in a contest with the tradition of 35 years of history and one of the richest seabeds. of the planet. In this way, once again this year, the Gran Canaria Open International Deep Sea Fishing returns to the summer calendar, during the last weekend of August, with its usual dose of happiness under the blue sky of Gran Canaria and enormous possibilities of catching a precious specimen of Blue Marlin, the greatest sprinter in the Atlantic Ocean.

Gran Canaria, with its 236 kilometers of coastline, is a preferred vacational port for many Europeans. The majority enjoy the coast and the coastline, the golden sand and the slipstream of the waves, but a select few undertake the adventure of their lives on one of the seabeds where the largest specimens of Blue Marlin can be caught, with records , before proceeding to the regulatory release, of specimens that can reach 500 kilos in weight, this being a variety that, although it is common in Canarian waters, is most present from May to November, between Punta de Maspalomas and the place known as Punta del Descojonado, near the coast of La Aldea de San Nicolás.

In this paradisiacal setting, in which marine currents bring together schools of fish on spectacular bottoms, sailors and fishermen from all over Europe are summoned. The Gran Canaria International Deep Sea Fishing Competition celebrates this year, between August 29 and 31, its fourth competition with international status and diffusion, under the organization of the Pasito Blanco Yacht Club and the Gran Canaria Chamber of Commerce, together with ports such as those of Mogán and Puerto Rico; and the protection of the Tourism Department of the Cabildo of Gran Canaria and Gran Canaria Blue.

It is a unique edition, according to the organization, full of surprises and novelties, since this competition, which has consolidated its growth in recent editions under the new international nomenclature, has been 35 years since the embryo of the competition was established. same, the Pasito Blanco Deep Sea Fishing Contest, one of the first fishing championships in Europe to adopt the concept of catch and release, which was imposed on the Gran Canaria initiative even before the IGFA regulations itself required it for the international fleet. These values not only remain in force, but have multiplied as an attribute of the identity of Canarian society and defended by all participants.

In recent years, the presence of international and regional participants has not stopped growing, until consolidating a catalog of 40 boats. In recent years, its media impact has been consolidated, with the collaboration and dissemination of the MoviStar Plus platform through specific programs included in its programming spaces such as 'Al Acecho' and 'Veda Abierta'. The latest edition featured the talent of artist and fisherman Carey Chen. On this occasion, the Open will feature the participation of a truly luxury prescriber, Bill Pino, founder of Squid Nation, specialist in sport fishing in the Mid-Atlantic and one of the most influential personalities in the United States market, who has confirmed his presence and participation in the event and becomes an ambassador of the championship.

The registration period for the test is now open and can be formalized through the website www.pasitoblanco.com

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

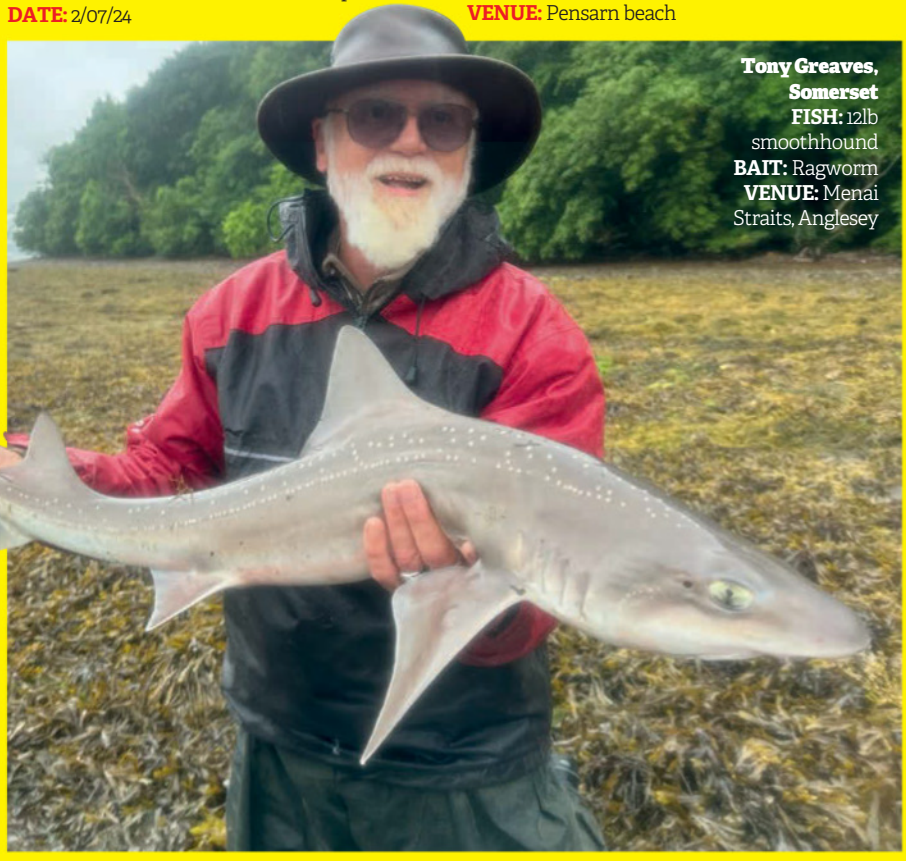
Orin Oriain, Co. Roscommon
FISH: 3lb 2oz spotted ray **BAIT:** Mackerel
VENUE: Donegal **DATE:** 7/07/24

Brandon Lee
FISH: Bonito **LURE:** Jig **VENUE:** South East
DATE: 19/07/24

Harry McKay, Glasgow
FISH: 17lb undulate ray **BAIT:** Mackerel
VENUE: Ocean Runners, Shoreham-by-Sea
DATE: 2/07/24

Mick Johnson, Stafford
FISH: 6lb 2oz bass **BAIT:** Black lug
VENUE: Pensarn beach

Matt Godfrey, Somerset
FISH: 12lb 2oz smoothhound **BAIT:** Softback crab **VENUE:** Blue Anchor beach **DATE:** 13/07/24



Tony Greaves, Somerset
FISH: 12lb smoothhound
BAIT: Ragworm
VENUE: Menai Straits, Anglesey

Macaulay Dixon
FISH: 15lb 10z smoothhound
VENUE: Lee on Solent

Darren Oliver
FISH: 44lb tope
VENUE: Swansea Bay

Barry Brook, Essex
FISH: 18lb bull huss and 188lb common skate
BAITS: Mackerel, squid and octopus cocktail
VENUE: Port Patrick, Scotland
DATE: 8-9/07/24

Orin Oriain, Co. Roscommon, Ireland
FISH: 6lb 2oz ling **BAIT:** Half mackerel
VENUE: Co. Donegal **DATE:** 12/7/24

Andy Charles, Port Talbot
FISH: 45lb tope **BAIT:** Mackerel strips
VENUE: Gower coast, South Wales
DATE: 14/07/24

John Cooper, Carmarthen
FISH: 7lb 3oz pollock
BAIT: Prawn
VENUE: St Justinian
DATE: 22/06/24

YOUR FISHING CATCHES

Oscar Zehr, Kingston upon Thames
FISH: 16lb smoothhound
BAIT: Hardback crab
VENUE: The Solent, Lymington
DATE: 13/07/24

Robert Hawes, Southend on Sea
FISH: 19lb 12oz smoothhound **BAIT:** Peeler crab
VENUE: Bridgemarsh Creek, River Crouch
DATE: 8/07/24

Andy McKay, Glasgow
FISH: 14lb undulate ray
BAIT: Mackerel
VENUE: Ocean Runners, Shoreham-by-Sea
DATE: 2/07/24

Adrian Westbury, Presteigne
FISH: 15lb conger
BAIT: Squid
VENUE: Aberystwyth

Sean Bryant, Saltash
FISH: 8lb 10oz Couch's bream **BAIT:** Soft plastic lure **VENUE:** Plymouth **DATE:** 19/07/24

Lewis Buckly Mellor
FISH: Tope **BAIT:** Mackerel **VENUE:** North Wales **DATE:** 07/24

David Edwards
FISH: Blue Shark
VENUE: Cork
DATE: 7/07/24

Dale Thomas
FISH: 6lb 4oz mullet **BAIT:** Bread
VENUE: River Tawe **DATE:** 21/7/24

Paul Farrugia, Hampshire
FISH: 15lb 5oz blonde ray **BAIT:** Squid
VENUE: Puller bank on Seamist **DATE:** 14/07/24

Jack Butterfield
FISH: 3lb sole **BAIT:** Ragworm
VENUE: Bristol Channel **DATE:** 29/06/24

Shane Foster, Wellington
FISH: 45lb 8oz tope **BAIT:** Mackerel flapper
VENUE: Heritage Charters, Watchet
DATE: 23/6/24

HOW TO ENTER

Email only to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk
Please supply these details: angler's name, age, address, telephone number, email, type of FISH, weight of FISH, where caught, DATE caught, BAIT/rig, whether caught from shore or boat, if from charter boat, give name of boat, port and skipper. Please state if the FISH was retained or returned.

Send us your entries and win some great prizes

- **SHORE LURE OPTION: Solaris 4000 or 5000 reel, RRP: £60, Epixor 15-50g rod RRP: £80**
- **SHORE LURE OPTION: Solaris 4000 or 5000 reel, RRP: £60, Epixor 15-50g rod RRP: £80**
- **BOAT: Classic CLX, RRP: £60 Cortez Boat Rod, RRP: £90**
- **SHORE BAIT OPTION: DSA reel RRP: £60, Wave Power surf rod, RRP: £80**

YOUR TARGETS...

Catch a FISH on this list at the weight or above in your region to qualify for the chance to win prizes in our Mission catch competition. To enter, send us the details requested above and email that information and your picture to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk.

	SHORE	BOAT
Bass	7lb	9lb
Black bream	2lb	3lb
Red bream	2lb	3lb
Couch's & Pandora's bream	1lb 8oz	1lb 8oz
Gilthead bream	4lb	4lb
Ray's bream	3lb	3lb
Brill	3lb	5lb
Bull huss	8lb	12lb
Cod	7lb	10lb
Conger	20lb	40lb
Dab & megrim	1lb	1lb
Dover/lemon sole	2lb	2lb
Flounder	2lb	2lb
Halibut	20lb	20lb
Ling	5lb	19lb
Mullet	4lb	5lb
Golden grey mullet	2lb	2lb
Plaice	2lb	4lb
Pollack/coal fish	6lb	12lb
Common skate	60lb	100lb
Blonde ray	12lb	17lb
Thornback ray	9lb	14lb
Small-eyed/undulate	7lb	11lb
Ray (other)	3lb	5lb
Sting/eagle ray	20lb	25lb
Smoothhound	10lb	14lb
Spurdog	7lb	11lb
Tope	27lb	35lb
Trigger fish	2lb	3lb
Turbot	10lb	13lb
Wrasse (ballan)	4lb	4lb
Wrasse (other)	1lb	1lb
Blue shark	-	60lb
Porbeagle/thresher	-	100lb

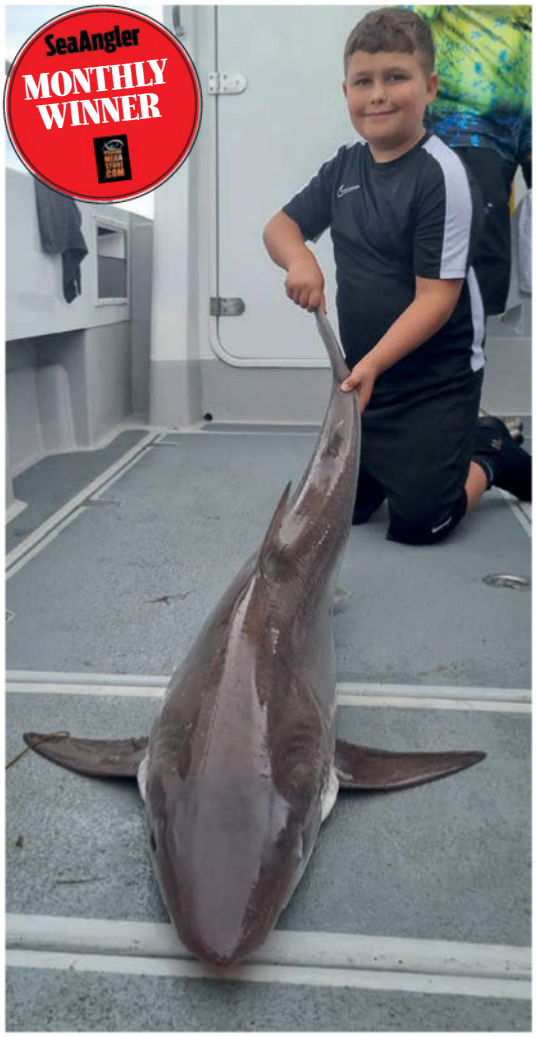
THE RULES...

- **Only catches since July 2024 are eligible.**
- **We must see a picture of the fish.**
- **We may refuse an entry.**
- **Enter by email only (please include all of the information requested in How to Enter panel) to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk**
- **Prizes as stated (Okuma reserves the right to send alternatives).**
- **No correspondence will be entered into.**

MONTHLY WINNERS:
SHORE: Dale Thomas, Swansea
BOAT: Sean Bryant, Saltash

YOUNG RODS

Sea Angler's celebration of the great angling achievements of its many younger readers



◀ Ten-year-old **Leo Stringer's** reel was screaming when he caught this 50lb tope – his first ever fish on a boat – on his first charter boat trip aboard Valkyrie from Gosport Marina.

▲ Nine-year-old **Winter Protheroe** caught this cracking smoothhound at Amroth – the smile on her face says it all!

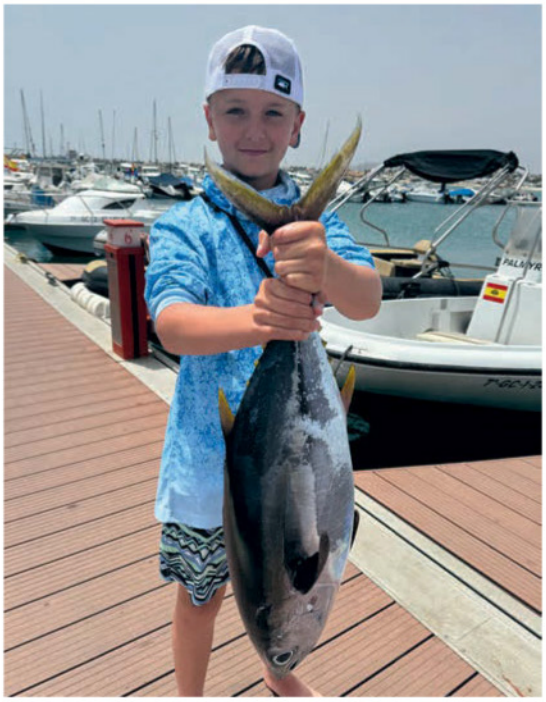
▶ **Callum Winward**, aged 11, from Middlesbrough caught this 680g cod from the North Gare Breakwater, Teesmouth, using a one-up-one-down rig baited with fresh dug lugworm. Callum was the only Junior angler fishing the St Marys Shore Anglers match and came second, missing first place and the heaviest fish by only 20g.

▲ **Ethan Redfern**, from Sandwick, Shetland, caught this cuckoo wrasse weighing 1lb 4oz from his own small boat using a mini squid with mackerel bait.

▲ Twelve-year-old **Davina Wyatt** was shore fishing for a local club at Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight when she struck into what she thought was as smoothhound. Much to her surprise she caught a 5lb 1½oz ballan wrasse on a pulley rig loaded with spider crab.

Saw Barratt, 14, smashing his shore PB with a 10lb bull huss from a secret south Devon mark!

▲ **Ben Whittaker**, aged eight, caught his first dogfish and tope off the coast of Rhyl on the charter boat Lunar Sea.



◀ **Olly Jones**, 13, caught a 48lb wahoo and 15lb yellow fin tuna fishing in Fuerteventura in the Canary Islands.

▼ **Alvey Munn** caught his first ever fish fishing from the Stone Pier at Weymouth, with his grandad. He went on to catch a few more wrasse, pollock and pouting.

◀ Twelve-year-old **Jack Laflin** from Thurston in Suffolk caught this 9lb smoothhound while fishing in the Brightlingsea annual boat competition. He was onboard Sea Leopard skippered by John Marks. He was using a running ledger baited with rag and tipped with squid.

▲ **Eden Tipping** was made up with this lovely bass caught in the Fleetwood Channel on yellow tails.

£25 TACKLE VOUCHER WINNERS

Fishingmegastore.com awards a £25 voucher prize to each of two winners - the youngster with the best shore fish and another with the top boat catch. The winners can use the voucher to select tackle from Fishingmegastore.com which is based in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

■ **Send your Young Rods entries by email to sa.ed@kelsey.co.uk**

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NEXT DAY DELIVERY
Order before 2pm Monday to Friday & get your order **NEXT DAY.**

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anyfish anywhere Tournament Match Pro Mk2 Review

"One of the most powerful rods I've ever had the pleasure of casting...The tip speed is immense & when the timing all comes together perfectly the rod's performance is totally exquisite."
Paul Fenech, Sea Angler Magazine

PRO RED LABEL SERIES

Worlds first truly Professional standard beach fishing rods

Grand Prix Pro Mk2
Slimmed down version, lighter by about 3oz's with 24mm butt + Reducer.

	RRP	NOW
Multiplier 13ft 10in - 4-7oz (150-200g)	£599.99	£459.99

NEW Uptide Pro MK2 Models
9ft 6in 172-300g & 90-200g - from £299.99

Estuary Rods MK2
Fixed Spool or Multiplier

	RRP	NOW
11ft - 30-90g	£249.99	£184.99
12ft - 30-90g	£249.99	£189.99

Bass Pro Mk1
12ft 6in - 90-150g Fixed Spool & Multiplier — RRP £325 NOW £275

Match Pro MK2
13ft 7in - 150-175g — RRP £549.99 NOW £499.99

GBFS Pro MK2
Fixed Spool 14ft + Reducer Casts 4-8oz (150-200g) — RRP £574.99 NOW £439.99

Tournament Match Pro MK2
Multiplier 13ft 11in + Reducer Casts 5-7oz (150-200g) — RRP £574.99 NOW £439.99

Kali Kunnan Shangrila Test & Team

Shangrila Team 45 Test Rod - 4.23m - 100-250g - 3 Piece..... £749
Shangrila Team 45 Test Rod Extension 4.23m-5m..... £96

Shangrila Team 45 Rod - 4.23m - 100-250g - 3 Piece..... £729

The Kali Kunnan Shangrila is a top end amazing quality continental rod which is currently being used by the team England shore team. These are 4.2m but an extension can be purchased for the Test model to take them to 5m in length.

▲ Test Rod Extension

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anyfish anywhere Blue Label Range

Exceptional performance both in terms of casting and fishing at a price point that makes them very accessible.

four&bait rod mk2

Surfcasting Rods	RRP	OUR PRICE
13ft 3-5oz Fixed Spool	£225	£179.99
13ft 3-5oz Multiplier	£225	£179.99
14ft 3-5oz Fixed Spool	£235	£189.99
14ft 3-5oz Multiplier	£235	£189.99

six&bait rod mk2

Surfcasting Rods	RRP	OUR PRICE
13ft 5-7oz Fixed Spool	£255	£199.99
13ft 5-7oz Multiplier	£255	£199.99
14ft 5-7oz Fixed Spool	£270	£209.99
14ft 5-7oz Multiplier	£270	£209.99
15ft 5-7oz Fixed Spool	£280	£219.99
15ft 5-7oz Multiplier	£280	£219.99

Choice of 12 Lines & Leaders

Daiwa Surf Rods — Fishing rods for beach fishing

SEAHUNTER Z - Beachcaster Rods
- Shrink Grip Handle • Parallel Handle design
- Power Progressive Actions
- DPS Slide Locking Reel Seat

	RRP	NOW
12ft 6in Beachcaster 4-8oz	£129.99	£109.99
13ft 6in Beachcaster 4-8oz	£139.99	£119.99
14ft Beachcaster 4-8oz	£149.99	£129.99

SEAHUNTER Z - Seabass Rods
- Suite to Fixed Spool or Multiplier • DPS Reel Seat
- Split Duplon Grip Handle

	RRP	NOW
11ft Seabass 1-3oz	£109.99	£99.99
11ft 6in Seabass 1-3oz	£109.99	£99.99

- Stainless Frame Guides with Aluminium Oxide Rings
- Premium Grade Blank

CROSSCAST 33 - Surf Rods
For distance beach work with a big fixed spool over clean to medium ground. The built in carbon Hybrid Tip, ensures bite detection across the species mix.

	RRP	NOW
13ft 10in Hybrid Tip 100-225g	£125	£89
14ft 10in Hybrid Tip 100-225g	£140	£115

SANDSTORM - Surf Rods
- Premium Carbon Blanks • Fuji BRC Butt Cap
- Split EVA Grip Handle • Sliding DPS Reel Seat
- SEAGUIDE Deep Drawn Frame Guides with Aluminium Oxide Ring

		RRP	NOW
12ft 6in Multiplier	100-200g	£180	£134.99
13ft 6in Multiplier	100-200g	£190	£139.99
14ft 2in Multiplier	100-200g	£190	£139.99
12ft 6in Fixed Spool	100-200g	£180	£134.99
13ft 6in Fixed Spool	100-200g	£190	£139.99

Daiwa SEAHUNTER Z

Seahunter Z Surf Rods

			RRP	NOW
12ft 6in	4-8oz	2 Piece	£129.99	£109.99
13ft 6in	4-8oz	2 Piece	£139.99	£119.99
14ft	4-8oz	3 Piece	£149.99	£129.99

Seahunter Z Bass Rods

11ft	1-3oz	2 Piece	£109.99	£99.99
11ft 6in	1-3oz	5 Piece	£109.99	£99.99

Seahunter Z Boat Rods

7ft 6in	30-50lb	2 Piece	£99.99	£89.99
7ft 8in	20-30lb	2 Piece	£99.99	£89.99
7ft 10in	12-20lb	2 Piece	£99.99	£89.99
9ft 6in	4-10oz	2 Piece Uptide	£99.99	£89.99

A strong and powerful feel with no compromise on performance. This range will serve across the boat and beach spectrum with ease, delivering tremendous value for money.

SURF BASS BOAT UPTIDE

Daiwa 4, 5 & 6 PIECE TRAVEL RODS

- HVF • X45
- 3DX • V-Joint
- Fuji 'O' Ring Guides
- Rubber Gimbal
- Multi Section assembly for compact pack down

Premium Grade Blank • Shrink Tube Handle • DPS Slide Locking Reel Seat • Stainless Frame Guides with Aluminium Oxide Rings

Saltist 4 & 5 Piece Travel Spin Rods

			RRP	NOW
6ft 5in - 28-84g	4 Piece		£195	£159
7ft - 14-42g	4 Piece		£210	£169
8ft - 14-42g	5 Piece		£220	£179
8ft 6in - 80-140g	5 Piece Travel		£230	£189

Tournament 4 Piece Travel Boat Rods

		RRP	NOW
6ft 6in - 30-60lbs	4 Piece	£235	£169
7ft 6in - 15-25lbs or 25-40lbs	4 Piece	£235	£169

Seahunter Z Bass Travel Rod - 6 Piece
11ft - 2-4oz 6 Piece..... SOLD OUT

Daiwa Surf Rods — Fishing rods for beach fishing

AIR SURF - Surf Rods
- SVF and X45
- Mega Top Carbon Hybrid Tip
- Guides: Fuji K Guide with Alconite (Multiplier)
- Guides: Fuji LC with Alconite (Fixed Spool)

			RRP	NOW
13ft 6in Multiplier	2 Piece	4-8oz	£515	£389
14ft 2in Multiplier	2 Piece	4-8oz	£525	£399
15ft 3in Fixed Spool	3 Piece	3-7oz	£550	£399

SALTIST - Surf Rods

		RRP	NOW
12ft 6in Multiplier	100-200g	£230	£189
13ft 6in Multiplier	100-200g	£260	£219
14ft 2in Multiplier	100-200g	£265	£225
14ft Fixed Spool	84-150g	£270	£229
14ft Fixed Spool Hybrid	3-6oz	£280	£229

TOURNAMENT - PRO Surf Rods

2 Piece		RRP	NOW
11ft 6in Bass Fixed Spool	2-4oz	£275	£229
13ft 6in Multiplier	3-7oz	£355	£289
14ft 6in Multiplier	4-8oz	£355	£289

TOURNAMENT - HT Surf Rods

			RRP	NOW
14ft	Fixed Spool Hybrid	3-6oz	£340	£249
15ft	Fixed Spool Hybrid	3-6oz	£360	£269

Daiwa MULTIPLIER SURF REELS

7HT Millionaire Tournament	7HT Millionaire Mag	7HT Millionaire Mag Super Tuned	SL20SH Sealine Slosh	SL30SH Sealine Slosh
RRP £225 **£159.99**	RRP £399 **£299.99**	RRP £595 **£419.99**	RRP £135 **£92.99**	RRP £135 **£94.99**

Daiwa SURF REELS — Fishing reels for beach fishing

Shorecast 5000B & 6000B	20 Crosscast 35 SCW 5000C QD	20 Crosscast 45 SCW 5000C QD	21 Crosscast 45 SCW QD OT	23 Emblem Surf 45 SCW QD	20 T Basia 45 SCW 5000C QD
Fixed spool surf reel	Surf reel	Surf reel	Fixed spool reel	Surfcasting reel	Surf reel
RRP £94.99 **£79.99**	RRP £125 **£99**	RRP £150 **£115**	RRP £165 **£119.99**	RRP £230 **£199.99**	RRP £790 **£599**

SHIMANO Speedmaster H SURF RODS

A mid-priced, fast action, long range surf rod which combines a high quality carbon blank with quality fittings and powerful casting performance. Sitting in the middle of the Shimano surf rod range and offers a variety of model options to exactly suit your preference.

			RRP	NOW
Speedmaster H Surf Rod 14ft (4.25m)	Hybrid	3 Piece - 150g - Fuji Fazlite K-type	£184.99	£149
Speedmaster H Surf Rod 14ft (4.25m)	Hybrid	3 Piece - 200g - Fuji Fazlite K-type	£194.99	£155
Speedmaster H Surf Rod 14ft 6in (4.5m)	Hybrid	3 Piece - 150g - Fuji Fazlite K-type	£199.99	£159
Speedmaster H Surf Rod 14ft 6in (4.5m)	Hybrid	3 Piece - 200g - Fuji Fazlite K-type	£204.99	£165
Speedmaster H Surf Rod 13ft (4.05m)	Hybrid	3 Piece - 200g - Fuji Low Rider Concept "O"	£189.99	£149
Speedmaster H Surf Rod 14ft (4.25m)	Hybrid	3 Piece - 200g - Fuji Low Rider Concept "O"	£194.99	£155
Speedmaster H Surf Rod 14ft (4.25m)	Tubular	3 Piece - 200g - Fuji Low Rider Concept "O"	£194.99	£155

SHIMANO ULTEGRA SURF HYBRID J RODS

The Ultegra Surf is designed especially for the serious ultra long range surf angler or tournament specialist. Combining some of SHIMANO'S most advanced carbon technologies with premium fittings, options of this stunning lightweight, well balanced range include both hybrid and tubular configurations to suit personal preference.

Ultegra XR Surf 13ft	200g	Hybrid J Low Rider	3 Piece	£249.99
Ultegra XR Surf 14ft	200g	Hybrid J Low Rider	3 Piece	£259.99
Ultegra XR Surf 14ft	225g	Hybrid J Low Rider	3 Piece	£259.99
Ultegra XR Surf 14ft 9in	200g	Hybrid J	3 Piece	£279.99
Ultegra XR Surf 14ft 9in	225g	Hybrid J	3 Piece	£279.99
Ultegra XR Surf 14ft 9in	250g	Hybrid J	3 Piece	£279.99

SHIMANO AERLEX SPECIAL OFFER — SURF HYBRID/TUBULAR RODS

Affordability, impressive casting performance and build quality, make this rod ideal for the serious angler with a limited budget, or the improving angler who wants to move up the price scale.

			RRP	NOW
Aerlex Surf Rod 14ft (4.25m)	Hybrid	3 Piece - 150g - Seaguide Zirconia	£129.99	£99
Aerlex Surf Rod 14ft (4.25m)	Hybrid	3 Piece - 200g - Seaguide Zirconia	£129.99	£99
Aerlex Surf Rod 14ft 6in (4.5m)	Hybrid	3 Piece - 150g - Seaguide Zirconia	£134.99	£99
Aerlex Surf Rod 14ft 6in (4.5m	Hybrid	3 Piece - 200g - Seaguide Zirconia	£144.99	£99
Aerlex Surf Rod 13ft (4.05m)	Hybrid	3 Piece - 200g - Fuji Low Rider Concept "O"	£129.99	£99
Aerlex Surf Rod 14ft (4.25m)	Hybrid	3 Piece - 200g - Fuji Low Rider Concept "O"	£144.99	£99
Aerlex Surf Rod 14ft (4.25m)	Tubular	3 Piece - 200g - Fuji Low Rider Concept "O"	£149.99	£99

SHIMANO ULTEGRA XR SURF RODS

The Ultegra XR Surf is a highly technical rod designed especially for ultra long range fishing. Combining some of SHIMANO'S most advanced carbon technologies with advanced tapers and premium fittings, this stunning range maximises distance performance for anglers with highly tuned casting techniques.

Ultegra XR Surf 14ft	225g	Hybrid Low Rider	3 Piece	£359.99
Ultegra XR Surf 14ft	250g	Hybrid Low Rider	3 Piece	£359.99
Ultegra XR Surf 14ft 9in	225g	Tubular Low Rider	3 Piece	£379.99
Ultegra XR Surf 14ft 9in	250g	Tubular Low Rider	3 Piece	£379.99
Ultegra XR Surf 14ft 9in	200g	Hybrid	3 Piece	£379.99
Ultegra XR Surf 14ft 9in	225g	Tubular	3 Piece	£379.99

SHIMANO SURFCASTING REELS

Surfleader Ci4+ Reel	Power Aero 14000 XSB Reel	Fliegen 35SD Reel	Bull's Eye 9120 Surf Reel	Bull's Eye 9100 Surf Reel	Aero Technium MgS XSD - 14000 Reel
RRP £284.99 **£199**	RRP £399.99 **£299.99**	RRP £459.99 **£399.99**	RRP £419.99 **£349.99**	RRP £419.99 **£369.99**	RRP £699.99 **£589.99**

SHIMANO SURFCASTING REELS

Aerlex 10000XSB Surf Casting Reel	Speedmaster 14000XSD Surf Reel	Ultegra XSD 5500 Surf Reel / Big Pit Reel	Ultegra 14000 XSD Surf Reel	Ultegra XSE 14000 Surf Reel	Ultegra CI4+ 14000 XSC Surf Reel
RRP £114.99 **£89.99**	RRP £164.99 **£129.99**	RRP £179.99 **£149.99**	RRP £174.99 **SOLD OUT**	RRP £209.99 **£149.99**	RRP £299.99 **£225**

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£139

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AIRSPEED SURF 435
MKII
CONTINENTAL ROD • 3 PIECE
4.35m / 14ft 6in RRP £379.99 £299

NEW
AIRPOWER SURF 435 RXP
MKII
CONTINENTAL ROD • 3 PIECE
4.35m / 14ft 6in RRP £439.99 £369

NEW
AIRTORQUE SURF 435
MKII
CONTINENTAL ROD • 3 PIECE
4.35m / 14ft 6in RRP £399.99 £349

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MKII
CONTINENTAL ROD • 3 PIECE
4.35m / 14ft 6in RRP £439.99 £369

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CONTINENTAL ROD • 2 PIECE
3.55m / 11ft 6in
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MKII
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13ft 10in RRP £449.99 £399

NEW
AIRPOWER SURF 420 GTR
MKII
CONTINENTAL ROD • 2 PIECE
4.2m / 14ft RRP £449.99 £379

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Glow-In-The-Dark Tip
FURY FX435 SRS POWER
CONTINENTAL ROD • 3 PIECE
4.35m / 4ft 6in
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FURY FX420/450
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Ideal for shore or in-shore boat fishing.
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Fixed spool reel
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Fireloop
Fixed spool reel
RRP £109.99 £89.99

Utopia CX8 / SX8
Fixed spool reel
CX8 - RRP £129.99 £89
SX8 - RRP £169.99 £125

Air Loop R8 / R10
Long cast fixed spool reel
R8 - RRP £146.99 £119
10 - RRP £154.99 £129

SALTWATER LURE REELS

Spyro RS/GT
Spinning reel. 8 Models
RS from £74.99
GT from £39

Iron Spin 50
Fixed spool reel
RRP £169.99 £149.99

SONIK GRAVITY X5 HT

Unground carbon finish at rod joints makes it easier to take apart after use •
White hollow carbon tip for easy bite detection in poor light conditions •
Fuji corrosion control frames provide 7 times more corrosion resistance •
Shrink wrap on the lower handle to improve grip whilst casting •
Super lightweight high modulus carbon blank •
X5 multi-directional nanofibre tip section lay-up •
Fuji Alconite K Series guides •
Fuji DPS reel fitting •

'It's an absolutely fantastic shore rod'
'The ultimate power is utterly immense and evident during the casting process'
Paul Fenech - Sea Angler review issue 566 Jan/Feb '19

RRP
14ft - 5-7oz - 2 Piece £329.99 £249.99
A true all rounder...15ft 4in - 4-8oz - 3 Piece £349.99 £269.99

SHIMANO STAND-UP BOAT RODS

TIAGRA XTR-A STAND-UP TROLLING
RRP NOW
5' 5" - 80lb.....£329.99 SOLD OUT

TIAGRA HYPER STAND-UP
RRP NOW
1.75m - 30lb.....SOLD OUT
1.73m - 50lb Bent Butt.....SOLD OUT
1.6m - 80lb Bent Butt.....£534.99 £359

TIAGRA ULTRA GAME STAND-UP
RRP NOW
5'4" - 50lb.....SOLD OUT
5'4" - 80lb.....£934.99 £549

TIAGRA LTD EDITION ULTRA A STAND-UP
RRP NOW
5'5" - 30lb - 50lb.....SOLD OUT
5'5" - 50lb - 80lb.....SOLD OUT

DAIWA BOAT RODS

Fishing rods suitable for boat trips

Kenzaki Super Boat Rods - 2, 3 & 4 piece - 13 Models
RRP £190 from £149

Seahunter Z-BU Boat Rods - 2 piece - 4 Models.....from £49

Saltist Jigging/Popping Boat Rods - 2 piece - 3 Models.....from £155

Tournament Boat Rods - 2 piece - 5 Models.....RRP £215 from £149

Team Daiwa X Boat Rods - 2 piece - 3 Models.....RRP £170 from £129

SHIMANO STAND-UP BOAT RODS

Fishing rods for sea fishing

TLD - A Stand-Up Boat Rods
This rod is the perfect choice when you want to fish for big tuna or shark.
• XT60 + Biofibre blank
• Machined from marine grade aluminum and anodized to prevent corrosion.
RRP NOW
1.67m 20lb.....SOLD OUT
1.67m 30lb Roller.....SOLD OUT
1.67m 50lb Roller.....SOLD OUT
1.67m 80lb Roller.....SOLD OUT

VENGEANCE - Stand-Up Boat Rods
• Perfect for small boats
RRP NOW
5ft 5in 8lb - 16lb.....SOLD OUT
5ft 5in 16lb - 20lb.....SOLD OUT
5ft 5in 20lb - 30lb.....SOLD OUT
5ft 5in 30lb - 50lb.....SOLD OUT
1 PIECE

TYRNOS - A stand-up Boat Rods
• ALPS heavy duty SIC lined guides
• Ideal for UK Shark Fishing
RRP NOW
1.65m 30lb.....SOLD OUT
1.65m 50lb.....SOLD OUT
1.65m 80lb.....SOLD OUT
2 PIECES

TIAGRA - Hyper Stand-Up Boat Rods
• High pressure carbon blanks • AFTO guides
• Pacific Bay Reelseat
RRP NOW
1.75m 30lb.....SOLD OUT
1.73m 50lb Bent Butt.....SOLD OUT
1.6m 80lb Bent Butt.....SOLD OUT
1 PIECE

DAIWA BOAT REELS

Fishing reels for sea fishing

4 MODELS
Sealine Slosh
Boat reel
from £92.99

5 MODELS
18 Saltist
Boat reel
from £239.99

3 MODELS
Saltist
Level wind reel
from £239.99

20 MODELS
20 Saltiga LD
Single & 2 speed boat reels
from £399

9 MODELS
20 Saltiga (G)
Saltwater spinning reel
from £899

SHIMANO BOAT REELS

Charter Special
TR LD Special
1000/2000
SOLD OUT

TLD
LEVER DRAG
Single & 2 Speed
7 Models
from £129.99

TORIUM A HG
5 Models
from £179.99

TEKOTA A
6 Models
from £189.99

TYRNOS
Single & 2 Speed
6 Models
from £199.99

Snowbee SPECIAL OFFER

DEEP BLUE² BOAT RODS

The latest Deep Blue² models, have an even lighter, crisper action than their predecessors! Finished in the same lustrous deep blue, with subtle cross-whippings and decals and using lightweight graphite reel seats and chrome-plated stainless steel rings to prevent corrosion. Accurately rated to IGFA line classes and at 7ft 7ins they offer the ideal length for the serious boat angler and include a model to suit all fishing situations.

Butt Cap
Gimbal

					RRP	NOW
10201	7ft 7in	IGFA 8lbs	Class	Butt Cap.	£139.99	£99
10209	7ft 7in	IGFA 8lbs	Class 'S-Flex'	Butt Cap.	£139.99	£99
10202	7ft 7in	IGFA 12lbs	Class	Butt Cap.	£139.99	£99
10205	7ft 7in	IGFA 12lbs	Class 'S-Flex'	Butt Cap.	£139.99	£99
10203	7ft 7in	IGFA 20lbs	Class	Gimbal.....	£149.99	£99
10204	7ft 7in	IGFA 30lbs	Class	Gimbal.....	£149.99	£99

10201 - 8lb (4KG) CLASS
Ultra-sensitive inshoreod for bass, plaice, brill etc.

10209 - 8lb (4KG) CLASS 'S-FLEX'
Ultra-soft Korean S-Grip tip section, for supreme sensitivity.

1020 - 12lb (6KG) CLASS
For inshore angler fishing reefs,inshore drop-offs, reef pollack etc.

10202 - 12lb (6KG) CLASS 'S-FLEX'
Ultra-sensitive tip. For heavier bait fishing, turbot, black bream & livebait.

10203 - 20lb (10LB) CLASS
Best 'all-rounder', for inshore fishing, bass etc & the hardest fighting wreck pollack.

10204 - 30lb (15KG) CLASS
Ideal for fishing wrecks. Powerful rod for hauling conger & ling out of deep-water.

SHIMANO BOAT REELS

SpeedMaster LD II
6 Models
from £189.99

TALICA
5 Models
from £299.99

OCEA JIGGER
Silver - 2 Models
from £379.99

OCEA JIGGER F CUSTOM
2 Models
from £399

TIAGRA
4 Models
from £549.99

Snowbee

DEEP BLUE JIGGING RODS

Ultra-lightweight for all day fishing with high modulus carbon for a fast, powerful action for maximum movement to the jigs. Ideal length for jigging, long enough to work the jig effectively, but short enough to apply pressure to set the hook.

				RRP	NOW
10250	6ft 6in	30-100g	3 Piece	£134.99	£99
10251	6ft 6in	120g	3 Piece	£134.99	£99
10252		200g	3 Piece	£134.99	£115

DEEP BLUE SPINNING RODS

The latest thinking in rod design coupled with Snowbee technology to bring a range of lure spinning rods at the cutting edge of modern lure fishing design.

				RRP	NOW
10255	7ft 3in	2-15g	4 Piece	£134.99	£125
10256	8ft	10-30g	4 Piece	£149.99	£139
10257	8ft	20-50g	4 Piece	£154.99	£125
10258	9ft	10-30g	4 Piece	£157.99	£129
10259	9ft	20-50g	4 Piece	£159.99	£129

Jigging
Spinning

Okuma CAVALLA REELS

INSPIRED FISHING

CAVALLA
CAV-5NS RH
Single Speed Lever Drag Reel - £199

CAVALLA
CAV-5S RH
Single Speed Lever Drag Reel - £209

CAVALLA
CAV-5II RH
2 Speed Lever Drag Reel - £225

CAVALLA
CAV-5NII RH
Two-Speed Lever Drag Reel - £210

CAVALLA
CAV-12II RH
Two-Speed Lever Drag Reel - £299

LEFT HAND WIND
CAVALLA
CAV-5NIILX LH
Two-Speed Lever Drag Reel - £249

FLADEN

RESCUE SYSTEM
ONE PIECE FLOTATION SUIT

An affordable flotation suit that does not compromise on safety. With the same extreme buoyancy and thermal protection that you expect from all Fladen Rescue System Suits. An Updated model of Fladen's popular 845 suit, the 845XY features the same functions and quality that you're used to, but with a modern touch.

RRP £189.99 £159.99

Okuma MAKAIRA BIG GAME REELS

INSPIRED FISHING
BIG GAME REELS

MAKAIRA
MK-30 II
Big Game Reel
£499

MAKAIRA
MK-50 II
Big Game Reel
£559

MAKAIRA
MK-50W II
Big Game Reel
£569

MAKAIRA
MK-80 II
Big Game Reel
£895

E+OE Prices subject to change. Goods subject to availability

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ORDER ONLINE www.uttings.co.uk Uttings

Vanquish FC

SHIMANO

Beyond Lightness

MGL SERIES

Pinnacle of lightweight engineering for finesse anglers seeking the ultimate in performance.

Equipped with the lightest Magnumlite Rotor. Perfect balance, lightness and low inertia rotation, produces exceptional performance and awareness.

1000, 2000, 2500, 3000, 4000, 5000

11 Models from £399.99

DAIWA

22 EXIST

Is this the BEST spinning reel ever made!

NEW

The future of Daiwa Spinning Reels is AIRDRIVE DESIGN. By reducing the weight of rotor, spool & bail assembly, a lighter rotation is achieved. The effortless rotation allows the angler to feel the true joy of trouble free function. This new chapter starts with 22 EXIST.

22 Exist PC LT 2500D G | 22 Exist LT 4000D G
22 Exist LT 2000D-P G | 22 Exist LT 5000D-C G
22 Exist LT 3000D G

RRP £850-£900 - 5 Models Available

from £699

okuma INSPIRED FISHING

MAKAIRA®

Inspired by strength. Constructed from the finest, strongest materials available these are tough and durable spinning reels, especially for big gamen fish.

SPINNING REELS

Makaira MK-10000L Spinning Reel - Left Hand £599

Makaira MK-20000LS Spinning Reel - Left Hand £599

Makaira MK-30000LS Spinning Reel - Left Hand £649

okuma INSPIRED FISHING

SPINNING REELS

TESORO

"The number one sales driver is the IPX-7 waterproof rating covering the body and the spool." Angling International

NEW

With hydro blocking technology for saltwater environments, 100% waterproof, strong, light weight aluminum body, specially reinforced high strength brass gears and a high output carbonite drag with Cal's drag grease on a full Dual Force Drag- (DFD) system, for tackling big game fish such as tuna and swordfish.

	RRP	NOW
8000PA SP Low Speed	£341.99	£299.99
10000PA SP Low Speed	£341.99	£299.99
14000PA SP Low Speed	£341.99	£299.99
18000PA SP Low Speed	£363.99	£319.99
20000PA SP Low Speed	£363.99	£319.99

Oversized, precision machine cut alloy main gear

okuma INSPIRED FISHING

SPINNING REELS

SALINA

"This new breed of reels offers another option for elite anglers." Angling International

NEW

One of the best saltwater fishing reels on the market. Features Okuma's rigid Litecast construction, Dual Force Drag System for extreme stopping powe, proprietary High Density Gearing with corrosion resistant coating, high-speed gear ratio and customized aluminum handle.

	RRP	NOW
8000 Spinning	£195.99	£159.99
10000 Spinning	£198.99	£159.99
14000 Spinning	£198.99	£164.99
4000H Spin High-Speed	£183.99	£174.99
5000H Spin High-Speed	£183.99	£179.99
6000H Spin High-Speed	£187.99	£179.99

DAIWA

BASS LURE RODS

Fishing rods for sea bass fishing

Sandstorm Bass Spinning Rods

- Premium Carbon Blanks
- Fixed Spool DPS Reel Seat
- Seaguide Deep Drawn Frame Guides with Aluminium Oxide Ring
- Split EVA Grip Handle

	RRP	NOW
11ft 6in 28-84g	£135	£110

2 PIECES

SALTIST - Bass Spinning Rods
- HVF High Volume Fibre
- X45 Technology

	RRP	NOW
8ft 10-35g	£185	£139
8ft 6in 10-35g	£190	£145
9ft 10-35g	£195	£149

SALTIST - Spinning Rods

	RRP	NOW
10ft 14-60g	£170	£149
11ft 6in 28-84g	£170	£149

2 PIECES

Whisker Spin - Bass Spinning Rods

Designed to cover the multitude of fishing styles, across lure and bait with monofil or braid

	RRP	NOW
8ft 10-40g		SOLD OUT
9ft 15-50g		SOLD OUT
10ft 20-60g		SOLD OUT

2 PIECES

SHIMANO LURE RODS

S.T.C TRAVEL SPINNING RODS

A travel rod with a transport length of just 58cm, this is a rod you can pack in your suitcase, car, backpack or wherever you want to store it!

		RRP	NOW
9ft	15-40g 5 Piece	£134.99	£99
9ft	20-60g 5 Piece	£149.99	£119
10ft	20-60g 5 Piece	£139.99	£110
2.4/2.7m	3-14g 6 Piece Multi Length	£139.99	£110
2.4/2.7m	15-40g 6 Piece Multi Length	£144.99	£115
2.7/3m	20-60g 6 Piece Multi Length	£159.99	£129

LUNAMIS BASS RODS

8ft 6in	6-25g, 7-35g	2 Piece	£329.99
9ft	5-21g, 6-25g	2 Piece	£329.99
9ft 6in	7-35g, 10-45g	2 Piece	£349.99

BASSTERRA BASS RODS

7ft 2in LRF	1-11g	2 Piece	SOLD OUT
8ft LRF	3-15g	2 Piece	SOLD OUT
8ft	6-28g	2 Piece	£59.99
9ft	7-30g, 12-38g	2 Piece	£69.99
9ft 6in	15-60g	2 Piece	£69.99

DAIWA

SALTWATER LURE REELS

BG	BG MAGSEALED	20 BG MQ	20 SALTIGA (G)	22 EXIST
Fixed Spool Reels 7 Models	Spinning Reels 7 Models	Fixed Spool Reels 10 Models	Fixed Spool Reels 9 Models	• 5 Models
from £119	from £149	from £169	from £899	*Is this the BEST spinning reel ever made!* RRP £850-£900 from £699

SHIMANO SALTWATER LURE REELS

MIRAVEL 10 MODELS	STRADIC FM 16 MODELS	20 STRADIC SW NEW 10 MODELS	
from £109.99	from £189.99	4000-14000 from £199.99	
SPHEROS SW 3 MODELS	SPHEROS SW-A 8 MODELS	ULTEGRA FC 10 MODELS	SARAGOSA SW-A 8 MODELS
from £99.99	from £164.99	from £119.99	from £199.99

DAIWA

KENZAKI

"Nothing short of superb"

Sea Angler Review, June 2019

Read the review by DAVID BARHAM on our website

Super Kenzaki FS (Fixed Spool) Boat Rod

6-12lb, 6-15lb, 12-20lb, 15-25lb, 20-30lb or 30-50lb 7', 7'6" or 8'

RRP £199 £169.99

BG Magsealed Spinning Reel 7 Models - RRP £195-£245 from £139

A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

SHIMANO SALTWATER LURE REELS

VANFORD 13 MODELS	VANQUISH 11 MODELS	STELLA FK 14 MODELS	
from £179.99	from £399.99	from £539.99	
TWIN POWER FD 11 MODELS	TWIN POWER XD 6 MODELS	TWIN POWER SW-C 11 MODELS	STELLA SW-C 14 MODELS
from £299	from £349	from £399.99	from £729.99

DOUGLAS SKY G

S6904 SALTWATER FLY ROD

Yellowstone Angler's WINNER of BEST 9ft weight 6 rod

BEST OVERALL ROD SWT & AWT SHOOTOUT

Altogether, you'll find the Douglas SKY G Fly Rod Series offers superb dampening and recovery, near-effortless casting, accuracy, and outstanding durability. Innovative top-of-the-line components include: REC Titanium Cerecoil stripper guides with zirconia inserts, REC Titanium recoil guides, AAAA flor grade cork, a skeletonized aluminum reel seat, double uplocking rings with nylon bushings, and burled blackwood inserts. Includes a plush rod sock and aluminum tube.

- Length: 9'0ft
- Line Weight: 6
- Action: Fast
- Sections: 4
- Weight: 93gram

9ft: #6 Saltwater £849.99

DOUGLAS SKY G

S8904 SALTWATER FLY ROD

8wt Shootout done by FIELD & STREAM WINNER DOUGLAS SKY G 8904 9ft #8

Altogether, you'll find the Douglas SKY G Fly Rod Series offers superb dampening and recovery, near-effortless casting, accuracy, and outstanding durability. Innovative top-of-the-line components include: REC Titanium Cerecoil stripper guides with zirconia inserts, REC Titanium recoil guides, AAAA flor grade cork, a skeletonized aluminum reel seat, double uplocking rings with nylon bushings, and burled blackwood inserts. Includes a plush rod sock and aluminum tube.

- Length: 9'0ft
- Line Weight: 8
- Action: Fast
- Sections: 4
- Weight: 102gram
- Saltwater friendly hard wear

9ft: #8 Saltwater Also available in #7 #9 #10 £849.99

G·Loomis SALTWATER FLY

UK APPOINTED DEALER

ASQUITH

Built on Shimano's proprietary Spiral X platform, the Asquith boasts superb power transfer from tip to hand, quick recovery, and increased sensitivity.

ASQ 890	9ft	#7 #8	4 Piece	£899.99
ASQ 1090	9ft	#9 #10	4 Piece	£899.99
ASQ 1290	9ft	#11 #12	4 Piece	£999.99

NRX+

Empowers anglers with confidence-boosting control in less-than-ideal situations.

NRX+ S 790 / 890 / 990	9ft	#7 #8 #9	4 Piece	£799.99
NRX+ S 1090	9ft	#10	4 Piece	£849.99
NRX+ S 1290	9ft	#12	4 Piece	£899.99
NRX+ 10810-2	8ft 10"	#10	2 Piece	£749.99
NRX+ 12810-2	8ft 10"	#12	2 Piece	£749.99

G·Loomis SALTWATER FLY RODS

UK APPOINTED DEALER

IMX-PRO S V2 SALTWATER FLY RODS

Rolled for pumped performance in salty environments, IMX-PRO V2S actions are tuned for utility in three specific areas: improved tracking in the wind, lifting generous lengths of line before a re-cast, and fish fighting control. G.Loomis engineers designed these versatile actions with gobs of power through the bottom half of the rod but, most uniquely, developed a slightly tighter tip to minimize tailing loops and improve tracking and line pick-up. A proprietary blend of technologies - Conduit Core and GL7 resin system - provides surplus strength and impact resistance without the extra weight, creating a blank that allows anglers to stay frosty when a "send" becomes a "bend."

9ft #6	4 Piece	£499.99		
9ft #7	4 Piece	£499.99	9ft #10	4 Piece £499.99
9ft #8	4 Piece	£499.99	9ft #11	4 Piece £499.99
9ft #9	4 Piece	£499.99	9ft #12	4 Piece £499.99

Snowbee SALTWATER RODS & REELS

SPECTRE RMX SALTWATER 4PCE

With the ever increasing popularity of Saltwater Bass, Bonefish, Carp & Pike fly fishing, the "Saltwater Predator" model is top of the Spectre range.

RRP £259 £139

PRESTIGE G-XS SW SALTWATER

The most powerful in the saltwater series, yet still deceptively light and easy to cast.

9ft #7 - 4 Piece

RRP £559 £399

Also available in #8 & #10

XS FLY REELS

The first choice for the best of saltwater Bonefish, Jacks, Permit and smaller Tarpon, or Bass & Pollock.

#7/9 #9/11 - from £199

SPECTRE FLY REELS

Ultra-lightweight, precision CNC machined aluminium reels for a better rod/reel balance

#9/10 #10/11

SOLD OUT

Scott Sector SALTWATER FLY RODS

IFTD WINNER

Scott Fly Rod Company introduces the all new Sector series of high performance, hand crafted saltwater fly rods.

Sector rods advance on Scott's award-winning Meridian series to bring you a new level of performance and reliability in saltwater fly rods.

8ft 4in	#10 #13 #15	3 Piece
8ft 4in	#6 #8	4 Piece
8ft 10in	#7 #8 #9 #10 #11 #12	2 Piece
9ft	#6 #7 #8 #9 #10 #11 #12	4 Piece

£999

Sector 'NZ SPECIAL'

The Sector New Zealand Special has been developed specifically for chucking everything required to catch trout in gin-clear water and crammed conditions - whether it be nymph rigs, big dry flies - or even streamers. A tireless allrounder!

9ft #6 4 Piece £999

Uttings ORDER ONLINE www.uttings.co.uk

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Major Craft

2 PIECE FIRSTCAST ROD
9FT 10-30g

SALTWATER BASS LURE ROD

SPECIAL OFFER

The First Cast range combines Major Craft's cutting-edge technology and extensive experience to offer beginner anglers a top-tier fishing rod at an affordable price. Whether you're new to fishing or a seasoned enthusiast, a First Cast rod promises a comfortable experience, allowing you to fully enjoy the thrill of lure fishing.

- Fuji guides
- Fuji reel seat
- Lightweight EVA grips

SAVE £40

RRP £129.99
NOW £89.99

WESTIN

NEW FOR 2023

W3 SEABASS 2nd GENERATION

The W3 SeaBass 2nd is a super-fast and long-casting powerhouse that meets the demands of the modern sea bass angler. These rods are packed with power, and due to the premium Torayca® carbon fibers, you still get a true lightweight feeling when fishing, fish, and detecting even the mostcautious bites. Use it from the bank or boat, the W3 SeaBass 2nd will get the job done no matter the situation.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

- Reel Seat: VSS
- D-Ring Hook Keeper
- Guides: LTS ring guides
- Handle: Premium EVA handle
- Reinforced with 1k woven carbon
- Blank: Torayca® High Performance Carbon blank

W3 Seabass 2nd generation 2 section with cloth bag

		RRP	NOW
8ft 4in	(250cm) 12.42g	£149	£129.99
9ft 1in	(273cm) 12.42g	£159	£139.99
10ft	(300cm) 12.42g	£169	£149.99

SAVAGE GEAR

NEW BAITCASTING REELS FOR 2024

SG6
Pure power in a compact package.
SG6 250 BC LH - 6.6:1....**£119.99**
SG6 250 BC LH - 8.8:1....**£119.99**
SG6 250 BC RH - 8.8:1....**£129.99**
SG6 300 BC LH - 5.6:1....**£149.99**
SG6 300 BC RH - 5.6:1....**£149.99**
SG6 300 BC LH - 7.3:1....**£149.99**

SG8
Power, style, performance and a - the SG8 series of baitcasting reels has it all.
SG8 250 BC LH - 6.6:1....**£154.99**
SG8 250 BC LH - 8.8:1....**£154.99**
SG8 250 BC LH - 5.6:1....**£199.99**
SG8 250 BC LH - 7.3:1....**£199.99**

SG10
Representing the very best of Savage Gear technology and innovation, and loaded with smart ideas to help you achieve your angling goals.
SG10 250 BC LH - 8.8:1...**£199.99**
SG10 250 BC LH - 7.3:1...**£239.99**

SAVAGE GEAR

Svendsen teams up with Henry Gilbey & Mads Grosell...

Henry Gilby & Mads Grosell have designed this amazing range of Bass rods, one of the most highly anticipated launches of. Thousands of hours of testing & casting lures from the shore in various conditions have gone into the development of these rods & lures.

Watch the Henry Gilbey Video

SG5S2 ALL-ROUND RODS - 2 PIECE

	RRP	NOW		RRP	NOW
8ft 3in 7-25g	£89.99	£69.99	9ft 7-35g	£94.99	£74.99
8ft 3in 10-35g	£89.99	£69.99	9ft 10-40g	£99.99	£79.99
8ft 3in 20-60g	£89.99	£69.99	9ft 15-50g	£99.99	£79.99

SG5S4 PRECISION LURE SPECIALIST RODS - 2 PIECE

	RRP	NOW		RRP	NOW
9ft 7-25g	£142.99	£99.99	9ft 6in 7-35g	£152.99	£109.99
9ft 2in 8-44g	£147.99	£104.99	9ft 6in 10-45g	£152.99	£109.99

SG5S6 ALL-ROUND RODS - 2 PIECE

	RRP	NOW		RRP	NOW
8ft 3in 7-25g	£265.99	£199.99	9ft 7-35g	£275.99	£199.99
8ft 3in 12-42g	£265.99	£199.99	9ft 10-50g	£285.99	£199.99
8ft 3in 20-60g	£289.99	£199.99	9ft 12-42g	£309.99	£199.99

SG5S5 PRECISION LURE SPECIALIST RODS

		RRP	NOW
8ft 6in 9-35g	2 Pce..	£147.99	£124.99
9ft 12-46g 9-35g	2 Pce from	£152.99	£129.99
9ft 2in 9-42g	2 Pce..	£152.99	£129.99
9ft 6in 9-35g 12-46g	2 Pce from	£152.99	£129.99

SG5S8 PRECISION LURE SPECIALIST RODS

		RRP	NOW
8ft 6in 9-35g	2 Pce.....	£295.99	£239.99
9ft 9-35g 12-46g	2 Pce from	£349.99	£259.99
9ft 2in 9-42g	2 Pce.....	£369.99	£279.99
9ft 6in 9-35g 12-46g	2 Pce from	£349.99	£259.99
10ft 12-46g 18-56g	2 Pce from	£367.99	£279.99

Travel Rods

		RRP	NOW
10ft 11-46g 18-56g	2 Pce from	£173.99	£159.99
9ft 9-35g 12-46g	4 Pce.....	£152.99	£139.99

Alpha SG6 Monster Halibut Rods NEW
See website for details

SAVAGE GEAR

SALTWATER LURE REELS

CLEARANCE

SG5S6
Strong, lightweight aluminium body and a carbon reinforced composite rotor, designed to deliver top performance. Features 6+1 sealed steel ball bearings, high- performance carbon drag system and our proprietary Dura Grease - all of which combine to help make the reel saltwater resistant.

5 BB + 1 RB | 7 BEARINGS

8 Models available - 4000, 5000, 6000, 8000, 10000, 14000, 14000H, 18000
RRP £154.99-£189.99 **NOW £79**

CLEARANCE

SG5S8
A reel with a unique coating that can easily withstood 500 hours of being sprayed with saltwater in testing. This SG58 with SW500 coating, is saltwater resistant. Features sealed 8+1 steel ball bearings, sealed drag system, lightweight and strong aluminium body and Carbon Reinforced Composite rotor.

5 BB + 1 RB | 9 BEARINGS

8 Models available - 4000, 5000, 6000, 8000, 10000, 14000, 14000H, 18000
RRP £169.99-£224.99 **NOW £99**

SAVAGE GEAR

LURE FISHING NETS

Rubber Mesh

Bottle and Net Clip
Strong ABS quick clip. L: 14.5cm W: 20g - **£4.99**

Pro Finezze Floating Landing Nets
The ideal Bass net for fishing off the rocks or on the beach - designed for lure fishing and fish care - great for Catch and Release.

	RRP	NOW
Medium	£24.99	£22.99
Large	£31.99	£28.99

Full Frame Net 120-200cm
Strong landing net, for landing big predator fish.

	RRP	NOW
XL	£94.99	£79.99

Pro Folding Telescopic Net
Extra large rubber mesh net bag, great for lure fishing & fish care

	RRP	NOW
L	£79.99	£69.99
XL	£89.99	£79.99

Pro Foldable Landing Net
Strong, lightweight folding net with rubber mesh bag

	RRP	NOW
L	£50.99	£44.99
XL	£54.99	£49.99

Full Frame Landing Net
Super strong landing net, designed to land big predator fish.

	RRP	NOW
L	£64.99	£59.99

SAVAGE GEAR

LURE BOXES AND WALLETS SELECTION NEW

2 SIDED WASHABLE LUREBOXES
Keep your hard lures organised with these strong, durable, two-sided washable lure boxes. Featuring sturdy, smooth hinges & tight-fit lids. Drainage holes help keep the inside dry & the double- sided design is ideal for large hard lures with treble hooks.

Recommended by *Henry Gilbey*

Short 20.5x17x4.8cm.....**£8.99**
Long 20.5x17x4.8cm.....**£9.99**
Large 29.5x20.5x6.2cm..**£15.99**

Rollup Pouch **£14.99**
Rig & Lure Flip Wallet **£15.99**
Zipper Wallet 1 **£16.99**
Lurebox 2A 16.1x9.1x3.1cm - **£5.99**
Flip Wallet Rig & Lure Bags - 8 Pack - **£7.99**
Zipper Wallet 2 **£15.99**
Lure Boxes - 4 Sizes **from £2.99**
Lurebox 3A 18.6x10.3x3.4cm - **£6.99**

SAVAGE GEAR

LURE BAGS FOR 2024

Specialist Rucksavck 23L
RRP £84.99 **£74.99**

Specialist Lure Bags

	RRP	NOW
M..	£79.99	£69.99
L..	£89.99	£79.99

Specialist Sling Bag 8L
RRP £44.99 **£39.99**

Specialist Shoulder Lure Bag - 16L
RRP £59.99 **£54.99**

Specialist Soft Lure Bag 10L
RRP £55.99 **£49.99**

System Box Bag

	RRP	NOW
Small	£46.99	£41.99
Medium	£64.99	£59.99
Large	£84.99	£74.99
X Large	£99.99	£84.99

System Caryall

	RRP	NOW
Medium	£49.99	£44.99
Large	£54.99	£49.99
X Large	£64.99	£59.99

SAVAGE GEAR

Working with Henry Gilbey, Savage have produced an amazing new range of soft plastics.
Read his blog on our website

Mads and Henry have done an incredible job, not just creating the rods but crafting an entire range of product positioned specifically for the UK and Ireland's army of bass anglers.
Richard Taylor, boss of Svensden

SANDEEL V2 SINKING LURES
Designed by Henry Gilby

12cm	22g 2+1	£8.99
14cm	33g 2+1	£8.99
15.5cm	46g 2+1	£8.99
17.5cm	65g 2+1	£8.99
11.5cm	22g 2+1 Weedless	£7.99
13cm	31g 2+1 Weedless	£8.99

6 Colour Options

SANDEEL PENCIL SW SINKING LURES
Shallow Water version

9cm	13g	£7.99
12.5cm	19g	£8.99
15cm	30g	£10.99

5 Colour Options

SANDEEL PENCIL SINKING LURES
Supplied with both a single and a treble hook.

9cm	13g	£6.99
12.5cm	19g	£9.99

8 Colour Options

See the Henry Gilby video on how to use them - it's on out site

Gravity Stick Mini Kit
12cm 13g - 7 Colours - **£8.99**

SAVAGE GEAR — BASS LURES

Working with Henry Gilbey, Savage have produced an amazing new range of soft plastics. - Read his blog on our website

SUPERB

SAVAGE GEAR SEEKER ISP NO 1 SELLER

Black Pearl | Fluo/green/yellow | Fluo/red/black
Green Silver | White Pearl

12g / 16g / 23g / 28g
6.8cm / 8.7cm / 9.8cm,
10cm - **Only £4.89**

Surf Seeker Bass Lure 10cm 30g Sinking
RRP £8.49 **£5.49**

Surf Seeker Bass Lure 10.5cm 35g Sinking
RRP £8.99 **£5.99**

Surf Seeker Bass Lure 10cm 30g
RRP £9.49 **£6.25**

Bullet Mullet Floating Lures

10cm - 17.3g	£8.99
11cm - 23.5g	£9.99

ACCESSORIES
Rattle & Spike Kit 1.5g 6+6pce - RRP £9.49 **£7.99**
#6/0 Weedless Hooks 6pce - RRP £7.49 **£5.99** 3g - 4pce - RRP £8.49 **£6.99**

WESTIN

SEABASS ACCESSORIES

NEW FOR 2023

W6 8 Braided Line 135m - **from £24.99**
W10 13 Coastal Braided Line - 150m - **£46.99**
W3 CR Floating Landing Nets **from £24.99**
W3 CR Adjustable Landing Net **from £39.99**
W3 Street Sling Medium - **£29.99**
W3 Leg Bag Medium - **£29.99**
W6 Roll-Top Backpack 25L - **£69.99**
W6 Roll-Top Backpack 40L - **£79.99**
W6 Dry Pouch 23x13cm - **£10.99**
W3 Quick Bag Small - **£44.99**
W3 Lure Loader Small - **£59.99**
W6 Wading Backpack **£124.99**
W6 Boat Lurebag Large - **£134.99**
W3 Street Bag Pro Medium - **£54.99**
W3 Lure Loader Large - **£59.99**
W6 Roll-Top Duffelbag Large - **£109.99**
W6 Duffel Bag X Large - **£149.99**
Forceps, Scissors, Pliers, Sheaths etc **£8.99-£29.95**

WESTIN

SANDY ANDY SINKING JIG LURES

The most realistic sand eel imitation ever made, this lovingly hand-painted little fella will bring in sea bass, cod, seatrout and whatever's hungry in the area. The pre-moulded jig mounted with an ultra-sharp sea hook and soft, durable body allows you to replace tailpieces and prolong its life, while the range of colour goes from natural to acid house!

12g 10cm...**£5.99** 42g 15cm...**£8.99**
22g 13cm...**£7.99** 150g 23cm...**£17.99**
32g 14cm...**£8.49** 300g 28cm...**£25.99**

RoboCod | Tobis Ammo
Brown Abalone | Snow White
Tobis Ammo | Butterfish
Snow White | Pearlescent
Pearl Sand | Black Silhouette

WEEDLESS
Ultra-realistic sandeel design based on the Sandy Andy Jig. This weedless version has been specially designed for saltwater species, particularly seabass. Fish it from the shore or boat fast or slow, on a steady retrieve or jigged amongst bottom structure. The slim body and small paddle tail work at any speed, creating that strike-triggering swimming action.

16g 10cm...**£4.99** 33g 15cm...**£6.79**
23g 13cm...**£5.99**

FIIISH LEURRES

Candy Shrimp
MUD DIGGER
CRAZY PADDLE TAIL
CRAZY SAND EEL
POWER TAIL

FIIISH LEURRES

Choice of over 100 Fiiish Lures on our website

BLACK EEL NEW for 2020
Khaki and Cloudy White with 40g leaded head

BLACK MINNOW
Khaki, Blue and Gold / Blue 140 and 120 with leaded heads of 40g and 25g

see the 4 VIDEOS on our website

We also stock
Candy Shrimp
Crazy Paddle Tail
Crazy Sand Eel
Mud Digger
Accessories

ima

SALTWATER BASS LURES

Lipper 120 Lure 12cm - BSK - 12g **£20.99**
Hound Glide 125F Lure 12.5cm - Pearl - 20g **£19.99**
Komomo II 110 Lure 11cm - Asinago - 15g **£20.99**
Komomo 125 Lure 12.5cm - Bora - 16g **£20.99**
Chappy 100 Lure 10cm - Aji - 18g **£19.99**
Salt Skimmer Rattling 110 Lure - 11cm - 14g **£19.99**
Sasuka 120 Reppa Lure 12cm - Sand Bora - 17g **£20.99**
Hound 100F Sonic Lure 10cm - Sexy Mackerel - 17g **£19.99**
iBorn 98F Shallow Lure 9.8cm - Matt Bora - 13g **£18.99**
Nabarone 125F Lure 12.5cm - Katakuchi - 16g **£19.99**

SHIMANO LURES

EXSENCE SHALLOW ASSASSIN FLASH BOOST LURES

NEW FOR 2022

Aan innovative jerkbait that is equipped with a unique 'Flash Boost' feature, making this lure a one-of-a-kind for inshore spinning for seabass and bluefish. Flash Boost feature increases 'flash' from the lure even when stationary. Equipped with AR-C system for increased casting distance and accuracy Floating - diving depth 0.3m

See the video on our site

T00 Maiwashi 9.9cm - 14g - **£16.99**
T03 Red Head 9.9cm - 14g - **£16.99**
T04 Candy 9.9cm - 14g - **£16.99**
T01 Bora 9.9cm - 14g - **£16.99**
T05 Purple 9.9cm - 14g - **£16.99**
T06 Black 9.9cm - 14g - **£16.99**
T07 Green Gold 9.9cm - 14g - **£16.99**
T02 Katakuchi 9.9cm - 14g - **£16.99**

E+OE Prices subject to change. Goods subject to availability

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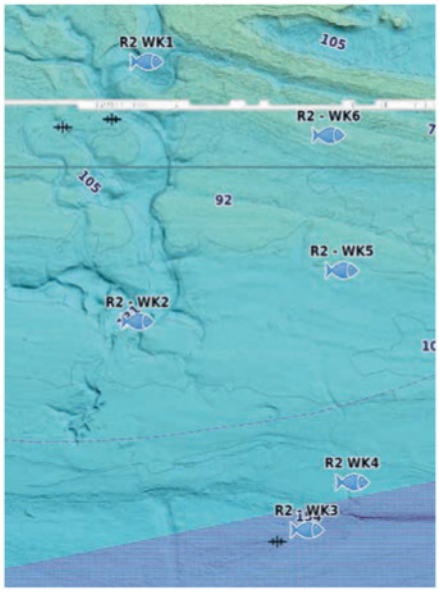
WORDS AND PICTURES BY Jake Davison

THE ART OF THE DEEP DRIFT

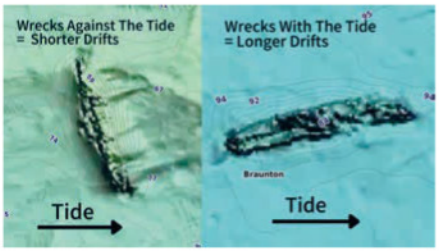
Jake Davison provides a beginner's guide to successfully lure fishing wrecks and deep-water reefs

Pollack, cod, coalfish, bass and ling are the more popular species you can target over a wreck when drifting your boat. It's probably one of the most successful ways of fishing in the UK, but it's somewhat of an art form. By the end of this article you should have the basic knowledge and, hopefully, the confidence to drift a wreck correctly and set up a drift on a reef. If you're already confident and have some experience, then maybe you will pick up some extra tips which can make all the difference in your catch rate. You'll also learn about what rigs and lures to use, as well as the subtle changes you can make to pick off those few extra fish. Everything you're going to learn here can be used over deep reef features as well as wrecks. So remember to try this method over deeper reefs too!



A wreck is typically a sunken vessel on the seabed that can be located on any decent chartplotter. They will be marked with the wreck symbol, and if you have relief shading on your plotter and the area of seabed has been canvassed for this, you will see the wreck as a dark shadow with clear ship-like features, such as the bow and stern. A chartplotter with relief shading is going to be beneficial to setting up your drift and working out which wreck you want to fish.

Wrecks can fish well in all types of tides and sea states: springs, neaps, whether they are ebbing or flooding; each will have their preferred tidal conditions and it's up to the angler to work this out over a period of time. They generally don't fish well over slack water, so opt for a tidal flow of anywhere between 0.5 knots to 2.2 knots. This will be the time when fish are feeding the most. Before setting out, though, it's a good idea to create a route map. Pick between five and 10 wrecks and number them in the order you wish to try them. This will save both fuel and time on the day. Wrecks sitting with the tide will give you a longer drift over the top, unlike wrecks which sit against or across it. I like to pick both large and small wrecks on my plan. The smaller wrecks often stay untouched for weeks on end as other boats overlook them. I've had some great fish over smaller wrecks. ▶



TACKLE

The rod and reel outfit is really a matter of personal preference. You may opt for a multiplier with lever drag, or one with star drag. Personally, I'd avoid fixed spool reels as they offer little leverage and you will become tired after a long day's wrecking or deep reefing. A standard 15-20lb 7ft boat rod will suffice. Do look for a rod with a subtle tip: anything too heavy and unforgiving will make it harder to keep the tension – especially on fish which will give the rod an ever-changing load as they crash and dive.

SETTING UP THE DRIFT

So you've got your plan and route map ready on your plotter, and you're at sea, all set up to begin your day. First thing's first: you need to set up a drift. When we are targeting those pollack, bass and other species over a wreck, you need your boat to drift over the top of the wreck with the tide, not 100 metres away from it. The first drift is what you call a dummy drift. Drive your boat to the side of the wreck from which the tide is pushing. Stop your boat around 100 metres from the wreck. Switch on your track lines on the plotter. Watch your track line and observe where your boat is now drifting. You may go over the wreck the first time or most likely you will need to make an adjustment and start again. Once you have marked your first track line, you can now predict where your boat should drift when you stop. Make a note of where you need to place your boat on the next run to ensure the next track line flows over the wreck. Your boat's drift will change with the variation in tide and wind, so the track line won't always be what you expect. Things will change throughout the day and you will have to repeat the procedure to get your boat drifting over the wreck again when the conditions change.

TOP TIPS FOR SETTING A DRIFT

■ Never drive over the wreck. When re-setting your drift, give the wreck itself a wide berth to avoid disturbing any fish with the thrum of the engine and movement.

■ You can start your drifts either on the bow or stern end of the wreck and work your way along methodically. This can funnel whole shoals along your drift line and lead to more fish. It's not always possible, but if you can work your way inwards, it can really pay dividends.

■ When stopping your boat for a drift, don't stop right next to the wreck. You want to give yourself time to get your lure to the bottom and to work it a few times without dropping it into the wreck immediately.

BOOM 'N' SHAD

So now you know how to correctly set up a drift over a wreck, let's look at the methods that will catch fish. There are a myriad of ways to use lures over wrecks. However, for the sake of simplicity, and the fact that this can be used to high effect, let's look at the boom and shad set-up. Wreck fishing will always end up in lost tackle and lost lures: it's an inevitable part of the experience. However, you can implement parts of your set-up to try and minimise tackle loss. I use a braided mainline on the reel of about 50lb breaking strain and find the lowest diameter I can (different brands will have different diameters, even if they are the same strength). Having a lower diameter will decrease the drag in the water column, helping you to get away with lighter leads on the boom.

On the days leading up to your trip, you want to make up your booms. I have at least 10 prepared for each excursion. The likelihood is you won't lose many booms and weights with this particular set-up. Do expect to lose a few lures caught in the wreck. The last thing you want is to run out of booms halfway through the session, so make sure you have enough to last.

Making "ready to go" booms is a simple affair. Run 50lb fluoro through your boom. On the shorter kinked end, attach a swivel and at the other end a link clip. At the rod end, I have a quick-change clip so that booms can be attached and detached quickly. The weights that I use on the booms vary from 4 - 16oz, depending on the tide's strength and water depth. Have a good selection and have enough! The deeper your wreck and the faster the tide, the heavier the weight required to get to the bottom quickly and comfortably. Your aim is to have enough weight to ensure your line holds vertically below the boat, and does not drift away from you, but not too heavy that it's going to make your arms ache after an hour or so and affect your enjoyment when you hook a big fish!

Weights are quickly detachable, so do experiment. Start light and work your way up if needed. For the business end, choose a 30lb fluorocarbon. This is near-invisible in the water and is the best line for the job. By having a lower breaking strain fluorocarbon on your lure end, but a higher main line and higher breaking strain through your boom, you will hopefully lose just the lure if and when you get snagged, and not the whole rig. Choice of lure is down to the angler. However, a Sidewinder Skerries eel or Sandeel in either 4-inch or 6-inch sizes is ideal.

Sidewinder offer a huge selection of colours and patterns; finding the one that works on the day is a part of the fun. So have a selection of different colours and lengths to hand. I tend to start with a 4-inch and work my way up to the 6-inch if the fish are in a predatory mood and feeding hard. The Candyking 4-inch Skerries eel recently caught me a 12lb 8oz pollack and my dad a 7lb bass. Your fluoro trace is tied on to the long end of your boom to the clip. How long you have your trace length is up to you. Personally, an 8ft trace is my go-to in a strong flowing tide. Others might prefer a trace up to 12 feet, so just experiment. Spring tides and tides above one knot will allow you to have a long trace length like this.

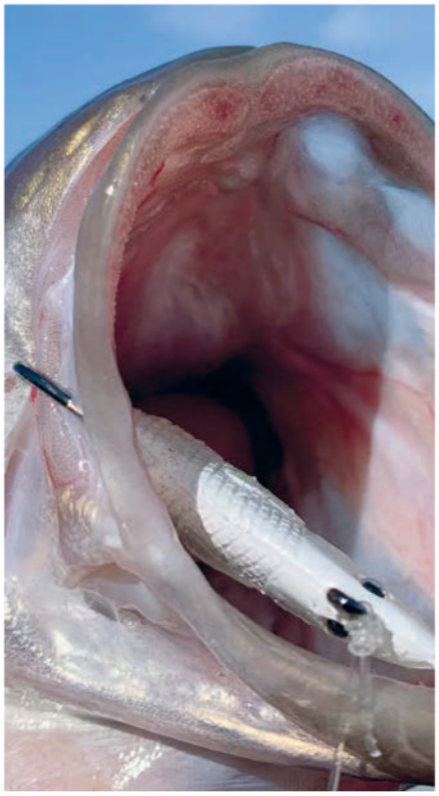
A top tip for you, on a neap tide or when a tide is sluggish, when approaching slack water, reduce your trace length to avoid tangling and spinning up the line. When you have under approximately 0.6 knots of tide, drop your trace length to about four feet. This will ensure you are fishing effectively and not getting tangled down below.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

So, you are now drifting over your wreck like a pro, terminal tackle is set and ready, and your rod is over the side, waiting for action. So how can you convert all this knowledge and preparation into fish?

Before dropping down your set-up, check the gear on your reel. It needs to be tight enough that a fish can't dive right into the wreck and snag you easily, but also not so much that you pull the lure out of the mouth, or the fish snaps you off on the initial run. It's a fine line (excuse the pun) and only by experimenting, and accepting that you might lose some decent fish, will you find the exact answer. In any case, it's best to opt for heavier gear over lighter gear. If you can pull braid off your reel with a reasonable bit of effort, it's probably about where it needs to be.

The fishing method itself is rather simple. Drop your weight to the bottom of the seabed, engage your strike lever or take off the free spool and wind up. Wind above your wreck and a bit more – perhaps 20 turns or so – then drop back down again and wind up. Repeat this process. If you watch your sonar, you should see when the wreck is approaching on the screen. Now drop your set-up to the bottom and retrieve. When you hit the ▶



bottom, be quick to get your first few winds in, otherwise you're going to be dragged into the wreck and your gear will more than likely snag. Retrieval speeds (how fast or slow you wind) will depend on how the fish are feeling. Sometimes they want it fast and sometimes they want it slow! Experiment on the day, but steady winding speed won't see you go far wrong. You may well feel fish pecking the lure on your retrieve. There are two main rules to hook up successfully: don't strike when you feel a fish taking the lure or attacking it, and don't change the speed of your retrieve. I will usually carry on winding 10/15 turns after an initial fish enquiry. They can commit soon after. When they commit, and your rod hoops over and line is being taken, hold the rod still and allow it to take the lunges of the fish. There's not much need to fight against it. When that fish stops taking line, begin winding your reel steadily. You must keep tension on the fish, otherwise they will eject the lure. Sometimes you have to wind more quickly if they are coming up in the water, so keep the tension on. You always want a bend in the rod and a tight line to the water. A steady tension on the rod and continued winding up will give you the best result for landing the fish. When the fish surfaces, keep the tension on your trace by grabbing it, or keeping the rod high in the air and walking back so you can net it.

Hopefully this has given you an insight into how to set up a drift and how you can catch the many fish that reside on the wrecks. It's an art form drifting a boat over a wreck, as well as the wrecking itself, so do take your time and practise. If you haven't done much of this type of fishing before, you've got a whole new style of fishing to explore, and master! ■

TOP TIPS:

1. If you are fishing with other anglers, it's a good idea to all use different lures to determine what type of lure the fish are taking on that particular day. It will make your session more productive.

2. If you're a beginner on a charter boat, make a mental note of the retrieval speed, trace length and lure that are working. And do ask your fellow anglers for advice!

3. When choosing your rod and reel outfit, don't be afraid to get a rod with a slightly larger lighter tip, as this will absorb the head shakes and runs perfectly.

4. Have your lure box and trace material to hand: if you snag up and lose your lure, you can quickly tie on another and get back down before you, or the skipper, need to re-set the drift.

FISHEAGLE Saracen Mackerel Outfit

- Fisheagle Saracen Mackerel Rod 11ft 1-3oz 2pc
- Fisheagle Q8 Surf Reel loaded with Mono
- Fisheagle Rig Wallet and 10 Assorted Bait Rigs

U117FSH
RRP: ~~£89.97~~
£39.99

FISHEAGLE Saracen Complete Beach

- Fisheagle Saracen 12ft 2pc Beachcaster Casts 2-4oz
- Fisheagle Q8 8000 Surfcasting Fixed Spool Reel
- Reel is Loaded with with 20lb Mono
- Fisheagle Rig Wallet with 10 Popular assorted Ready Tied Bait Beach rigs
- Spool of 40lb Powerstorm Vi Vis Shockleader

RE0721
RRP: ~~£98.96~~
£49.99

FISHEAGLE Expert MKII 2pc Flotation Suit

The latest edition of the best selling Expert 2-piece Flotation suit is state of the art and has been produced and conforms to ISO 12402-5 & 12402-6 regulations. This update has all the functions and quality that you are used too, but with a modern touch and extra safety features. Bib and Brace trousers that are certified as a 50 Newton Buoyancy Aid having been specially designed to elevate the top half of your body when in water.

The suit features a reflective tape for night safety, a stitched-in belt with ITW Nexus buckle and a CE 394 whistle. Made from a light, wind and water-resistant fabric, they provide comfort for any inclement trips day or night as well as safety in the water.

RRP £139.99
OUR PRICE
£119.99

CODE	SIZE
RE0852	S
RE0853	M
RE0854	L
RE0855	XL
RE0856	2XL
RE0857	3XL
RE0858	4XL

BEST SELLER

Shakespeare Catch More Fish Spin Kit

The Catch More Fish 2 Spin Kit is ideal for beginners and offers great value for money. The kit includes a 9ft rod with a pre-spooled reel and a tackle box full of terminal items to get you started.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	PRICE
SP4151	9ft	40-80g	2	~~£54.99~~	£40.00

Shakespeare Firebird Boat Multiplier Rod & Reel + Lucas Pirk Combo

Firebird Combos are perfect for anglers looking for a reliable product without breaking the bank. They display strong and attractive Firebird artwork and cosmetics that appeal to anglers of all ages.

HALF PRICE

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	PRICE
SP4898	7ft	20-30lb	2	~~£69.99~~	£29.99

KINETIC Fantastica Sea Spinning Combos

A general-purpose freshwater rod and reel setup that's perfect for everything from lightweight perch and trout to heavyweight pike and salmon.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	PRICE
KN0870	7ft	12-40g	2	~~£44.99~~	£28.00
KN0871	8ft	12-40g	2	~~£49.99~~	£32.00
KN0872	9ft	20-60g	2	~~£59.99~~	£36.00
KN0873	10ft	15-50g	2	~~£64.99~~	£40.00

Abu Garcia Max X Bass Spinning Combos

The MAX X combos are light, modern, strong and reliable spinning combos for predator fishing. Comes with a MAX X rod & reel.

CODE	LEN	CASTS	PCS	RRP	PRICE
PU11132	8ft	20-60g	2	~~£112.99~~	£50.00
PU11135	10ft	15-40g	2	~~£129.99~~	£60.00

IMAX Thermo Suit

Designed for winter wear it features a lovely warm thermal lining and is cut to allow easy movement when walking, casting and fishing.

CODE	SIZE
SV9635	M
SV9636	L
SV9637	XL
SV9638	2XL

ALL SIZES
RRP: £129.99
£89.99

stillwater Boat & Shore Polar PVC Wellington Boots & Lining

The rugged PVC construction keeps out the water, while the removable fleece liner keeps the heat in.

ALL SIZES
RRP: ~~£29.99~~
£19.99

CODE	SIZE
RE0511	7
RE0512	8
RE0513	9
RE0515	10/10.5
RE0516	11
RE0517	12

SAVAGE GEAR Seeker ISP Lures

- Enticing swimming action
- Long casting design
- 360 degree rotation movement
- Ultra sharp Savage Gear y-trebles

COLOUR	68MM/12G	87MM/16G	98MM/23G	102MM/28G
Green Silver	SV21596	SV18002	SV18007	SV18012
Fluo UV Green Yellow	SV21597	SV18003	SV18008	SV18013
Fluo UV Red Black	SV21598	SV18004	SV18009	SV18014
Black Pearl	SV21599	SV18005	SV18010	SV18015
White Pearl	SV21600	SV18006	SV18011	SV18016
OUR PRICE	£6.49	£6.49	£5.99	£6.49

WESTIN Salty Lures

FULL RANGE AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE!

This bestselling Westin lure has it all.

COLOUR	7CM / 12G	9CM / 18G	11CM / 26G
Canned Sardine	WN2086	WN2104	WN2122
GFR	WN2088	WN2106	WN2124
Dotted Sardine	WN2089	WN2107	WN2125
Diamond Thief	WN2090	WN2108	WN2126
Pattegrisen	WN2093	WN2111	WN2129
3D Yellow Ayu	WN3177	WN3184	WN3191
3D Brown Headlight	WN3178	WN3185	WN3192
3D Sparkling Herring	WN3179	WN3186	WN3193
UV Hottie Pearl	WN3180	WN3187	WN3194
PRICE	£5.99	£6.50	£6.99

GREYS Breathable Storm Jacket

Made from a lighter weight Climatex™ material, the jacket is a lighter, cooler jacket which offers exceptional weatherproofing qualities.

SIZE	CAMO	CARBON
M	GR2494	GR2502
L	GR2495	GR2503
XL	GR2496	GR2504
2XL	GR2497	GR2505

ALL SIZES
RRP: £159.99
£60

IMAX Oceanic Luggage

Easy to clean with sallwater resistant zippers.

CODE	MODEL	RRP	NOW
SV24393	Rucksack	~~£74.99~~	£45.00
SV24399	EVA Accesory Bag	~~£19.99~~	£10.00
SV24400	Cooler Wallet	~~£24.99~~	£10.00

SAVAGE GEAR Sandeel V2 2+1 Pack

NEW

This super realistic sandeel imitation will fool even the wariest of predator fish.

COLOUR	12CM 22G	14CM 33G	15.5CM 46G	17.5CM 65G
Green Silver	SV23661	SV23667	SV23673	SV23679
Khaki	SV23662	SV23668	SV23674	SV23680
White Pearl Silver	SV23663	SV23669	SV23675	SV23681
Blue Pearl Silver	SV23664	SV23670	SV23676	SV23682
Lemon Back	SV23665	SV23671	SV23677	SV23683
Pink Pearl Silver	SV23666	SV23672	SV23678	SV23684
PRICE	£8.99	£9.99	£10.99	£11.99

EVEN MORE V2 LURES AVAILABLE ONLINE!

FISHEAGLE Hunt Lures

Features a sandeel style body and are designed so that they can be cast at a distance.

COLOUR	28G	43G
Green/Silver	TA2529	TA2534
Fluoro/Green/Yellow	TA2530	TA2535
Fluoro/Red/Black	TA2531	TA2536
Black Pearl	TA2532	TA2537
Silver Pearl	TA2533	TA2538
RRP	~~£4.99~~	~~£5.50~~
NOW	£2.99	£3.50

DAM IMAX FR Competition Beach Shelter

HALF PRICE

- Super lightweight shelter
- Pegging points and sand skirt
- External rod holders
- Packs down small for transport
- Comes in storage bag with handles
- 110x20x14cm

SV17770
RRP: ~~£189.99~~
£95

FISHEAGLE Match Tripods

Economic Telescopic 2 Rod Tripod from Fisheagle that's fantastic for anglers on the move. Easy to fit in your quiver, it packs down to 91 or 120cm for whenever you see a likely mark.

CODE	MODEL	RRP	NOW
RE0365	2 Rod Travel 91-152cm	~~£44.99~~	£34.99
RE0851	2 Rod Extending 120-195cm	~~£39.99~~	£29.99

SAVAGE GEAR Gravity Stick Lures 6 per pack.

A slim-profile, long-casting range of soft lures with a high specific gravity. All the lures have a rattle slot in the main body plus an insert weight slot in the tail area to add even more distance to your cast if required.

COLOUR	PULSETAIL	PADDLETAIL	PINTAIL
White	SV22091	SV22095	SV22087
Wakasagi	SV22092	SV22096	SV22088
Khaki	SV22093	-	SV22089
Green Silver UV	SV22094	SV22098	SV22090
High-Vis	SV23757	-	SV23761
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Words and photography by DAVE LEWIS

TO STAY, OR GO?

Small boat specialist Dave Lewis provides some expert advice on what to do when your chosen fishing mark isn't producing bites, but other marks are

Should I Stay Or Should I Go?' is a classic rock anthem by the Clash from their 1981 album 'Combat Rock'. No doubt you are asking yourself what possible significance this could have for an article on boat fishing. Well, the answer, as anyone who has ever skippered their own boat will undoubtedly be quick to confirm, is a simple one: whenever you are fishing a mark at anchor and you are struggling for a bite – and you know that other boats in the vicinity are catching fish – you have to decide: do you stay or do you go?

We've all experienced them, days when you struggle to catch a fish while other boats are doing well. At such times your mind goes into overdrive. It's like having a voice in one ear saying 'move, there are no fish here, they're all over there'. While a voice in the other ear counters with, 'no, this was your first choice mark, stick it out here, the fish will come'. So, what do you do?

It's a tough one to answer and, in all honesty, if you are new to fishing a particular mark or piece of ground, acting on intel received might very well be the better option. But for the sake of this article let's assume you are fishing an area you know well, somewhere you have caught fish on previous occasions. It's a mark where, based on past experience, you decided to fish there in the first place so, in theory at least, you are in the right place.

A lot of the decision-making process will depend on which species of fish you are targeting. More specifically, how they move through the area you are fishing. For example, species such as cod, smoothhounds, bass and tope often move considerable distances throughout a typical six-hour tidal cycle. Others such as ray, conger, flatfish and bream are far less

mobile, typically remaining within the immediate vicinity of a relatively small area such as a reef, wreck or sandbank, feeding at specific times throughout the tidal cycle. Let's take a look at the first scenario.

MOBILE SPECIES

The 1990s was a hugely productive period for winter cod fishing in the Bristol Channel. Seated aboard my own boat while waiting patiently for a bite, listening to reports over the VHF confirming fish being caught elsewhere used to be hugely frustrating. But, from past experience, I knew that, while at times it was tempting to haul the anchor and relocate, I also realised that by the time I had repositioned there was a very good chance the fish would have moved on, possibly to the area I had just left. As good as the cod fishing used to be, on many occasions catching them would be a waiting game. Then, and now, the trick was to anchor over a known mark and wait for them to arrive.

In the hunt for species such as cod it is essential to ensure you are using large, juicy baits, baits that emit as strong a scent trail as possible. When the fishing is slow it is all too easy to become complacent and leave baits out fishing until they become washed out and next to useless. In reality, you are much better off increasing the frequency that you reel in to check and refresh your bait. Like so many other species, cod feed primarily on scent and provided you maintain as strong a scent trail as possible, your patience will almost always be rewarded by a nodding rod tip. The same is true when fishing for rays. With the single exception of stingrays, ray are not an especially mobile species, but they do respond very well to a strong scent trail, and if there are rays in the area you are fishing, then eventually they will find and eat your baits.

Other species, such as smoothhounds and tope, typically cover huge distances throughout a tidal cycle, often turning up at specific marks at specific stages of the tide. These species will also respond to a scent trail, but only as they start to approach that particular area at their preferred state of tide. Being very much creatures of habit, the key to catching species such as these is learning their feeding patterns. If one day you locate a pack of smoothhounds feeding at a certain stage of the tide, then it's a fair bet that in the future you'll also encounter fish in exactly the same area at a similar stage of the tide. If these are your objective then your game plan should be to get anchored in position before the productive period and wait for the fish to arrive. Once again, patience is key, but ensuring your baits are large, fresh and juicy, and therefore as effective as possible, will normally seal the deal.

LOCALISED SPECIES

When fishing for species that are mark specific, that is to say black bream over a reef, or flatfish over a sandbank, once again, inducing the fish to feed by introducing a strong scent trail is essential. These species, along with many others, typically feed at certain stages of tide and initially they may be relatively inactive. However, more often than not they can be encouraged to feed by a combination of patience and the scent from good baits.

Of course, there are numerous other factors that come into play when determining when fish do or do not feed, and exactly when a particular mark produces fish. The simple fact of the matter is that if you spend your day running between marks you are certainly not going to catch anything while your baits are out of the water. 'Dry lures don't catch fish' is an oft quoted saying at many destinations I have fished, and there can be no doubting the truth of that. Do your homework, select your marks based on experience and reliable intel, keep your baits as fresh and full of as much scent as possible. Above all, learn to be patient. ■

Words and pictures
TIM MACPHERSON

LIVING THE BREAM!

Black bream are a stunning fish that many sea anglers will be catching this summer, yet we know very little about them. Now anglers and scientists are tag-teaming to dive into the secret lives of one of our favourite summer species

Summer is here, and so are the black bream. But where have they been over the winter? And what's going on at their nesting sites?

Angling for Sustainability is a new collaboration between anglers and scientists from the University of Plymouth. It's a partnership with the Professional Boatman's Association, the Angling Trust, Natural England and Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA), and the project is tracking black bream around the Dorset coast to identify which habitats are essential for the species, how the bream behave when they're using these habitats and how angling interacts with their behaviour. The collaboration is funded by Defra under their Fisheries Industry Science Partnership (FISP) scheme.

The project aims to improve our understanding of this little-known species to create a sustainable future for black bream and recreational angling. So, what does the project involve?

The Plymouth tagging team at sea

TRACKING BLACK BREAM AROUND DORSET

Unsurprisingly, like most fish, black bream spend the majority of their lives swimming, but many questions remain about their movements. The Angling for Sustainability team is tracking individual black bream by fitting them with a particular type of tag, known as an acoustic tag, that emits a unique high-frequency 'ping'. Specially-designed receivers are deployed on the seabed and are constantly listening out for a tagged fish. They will pick up signals from fish swimming within about 300m.

The project has deployed 55 new receivers around Dorset, the Solent and the Isle of Wight. These receivers add to the existing University of Plymouth network of nearly 200 receivers along the South Coast, from Cornwall to Sussex, listening out for the pings of a range of tagged fish in our seas. The research team also gets sent data from a wider network of receivers deployed by other researchers all around Europe, so if one of the tagged bream ends up beyond the South Coast of England, we will hopefully know about it.

A fish being prepared for tagging

Another Dorset fish to tag and release

Tapping into the wide coverage of the receiver network means scientists at the University of Plymouth can study how far fish travel – something we are particularly keen to discover through this project. The new Angling for Sustainability receivers also provide insights into how black bream behave in nesting grounds. This is made possible by creating three close clusters of receivers (known as fine-scale arrays) which show the movement of fish in fine detail. These receivers are placed at well-known spawning grounds along the Dorset and Sussex coast and are providing information on how black bream behave at these sites.

Before the Angling for Sustainability project, the team at the University of Plymouth tagged black bream through a European collaboration known as FISH INTEL, with 64 black bream being tagged around Sussex in 2022. Under the new Defra-funded project, 136 bream were tagged off the Dorset coast in 2023, all caught at the nesting sites being studied. Tagging is already underway in 2024, with 40 fish tagged in April. The tags are small enough not to affect the fish but large enough to contain a battery that lasts up to two years.

The University of Plymouth team visits each receiver once every six months to collect all the data it has been storing. In April, they headed to Dorset for a data download trip and were thrilled by the results. The data is revealing fascinating insights into the lives of black bream and their nesting sites, and they are excited to share these discoveries.

BREAM BEHAVIOUR AT NESTING SITES

As fish that are caught and tagged through the project are released straight back into the spawning grounds they were caught from they provide immediate insights into their lives around nesting sites.

Tagging data collected through the project so far indicates that most black bream initially remained close to the site they were tagged, staying nearby for an average of about 10 days. During this time, some fish demonstrated evidence of nesting behaviour as they remained almost stationary in a very small area. While other fish were much more mobile, they still stayed within the small area of the nesting site. This interesting contrast may reflect the different behaviour of males and females—that's something the team hope to study further.

Black bream have already started returning to Dorset, and the first tagged fish were detected in mid-March. The return of last year's black bream means that we can now track these fish over an entire breeding season, hopefully revealing insights into how long they spend at nesting sites. The work from 2022 in Sussex found that, on average, tagged black bream stayed at nesting sites for just over a month. Will we see the same in Dorset? The 2024 data will shed light on that question.

Another question researchers are keen to answer is whether individual fish return at the same time each year. Will the fish tagged in April 2024 be early to arrive again in 2025? The research team are committed to providing anglers with the most up-to-date and comprehensive information about the black bream and their habitats through regular workshops with the angling sector and posts across partner social media channels.

BREAM BEYOND DORSET AND SUSSEX

Fish come together in large numbers during the spawning season, but the rest of the year is a different story. So where do black bream from Dorset and Sussex go?

There's no simple answer to that question, and we have already seen a great variety of behaviours outside the spawning season. The team detected fewer bream in Dorset and Sussex over the winter, suggesting that many of them migrate away from their summer nesting and feeding areas during this time. Some of the bream tagged in Dorset have been detected in Devon and Cornwall. Some moved east and were redetected on Sussex receivers. Other fish travelled even further – some were even detected in the Channel Islands over the winter.

As the fish return to Dorset in 2024, the team are particularly keen to discover whether they are loyal to the nesting grounds they were caught at in 2023. In Sussex, most of the bream scientists at the University of Plymouth detected returned to where they were tagged. Even comparing two nesting sites just 18km apart revealed very little crossover – most fish returned to the same site they were caught at the year before. This shows a remarkable homing ability. Detections in the Channel Islands prove that some black bream are highly migratory and travel hundreds of miles during the winter, yet we've seen them return the following spring to within a few hundred metres of where they were caught the year before.

The results from the Angling for Sustainability project are all preliminary, as they haven't yet collected data from all their receivers. They're also waiting for data from receivers further afield that are managed by other teams, so there may be more detections elsewhere over the winter. ■

THE ANGLING FOR SUSTAINABILITY PARTNERSHIP

Angling for Sustainability is a unique collaboration between recreational angling stakeholders, scientists, government advisors and fisheries managers. A core aspect of the project is working closely with the recreational angling community and has been instrumental in setting up and running the project. Their input includes assisting with fish tagging and reporting sightings of tagged fish.

Last year, anglers and charter skippers joined to discuss the project at workshops in Poole and Weymouth. In April this year they presented their initial data at a workshop in Poole, and participants shared their experiences of fishing for black bream. It was fantastic to hear their local knowledge on the change in black bream distribution, movements and abundance in recent years. Angling for Sustainability is a partnership research project, so hearing views from the recreational sector is crucial. If you'd like to join future workshops, please email fishtracking@plymouth.ac.uk.

THE FUTURE?

The project is a research collaboration that is not responsible for fisheries management. However, where appropriate, the team works closely with regulators and aims to provide them with the data they need to inform fisheries management decision-making.

As we know so little about black bream, it is classified as a data-poor species. For black bream to thrive in the future, it's important data is collected to inform changes in the population and to ensure any decision-making on management is proportionate, non-discriminatory and robust. Both unsustainable fishing and excessive precautionary management can have severe consequences for angling and wider coastal communities.

It is too early to know what, if any, measures may be needed to safeguard black bream and support sustainable angling based on the data. Future data collected in 2024 will help draw more reliable conclusions, and they are committed to transparently engaging with the recreational angling sector as this emerges.

Data from the tagging will help us understand how to manage bream stocks across the UK

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Words and Photography by DAVE LEWIS

SEA SCORPIONS

UK & IRELAND SPECIALIST SPECIES HUNTING

Dave Lewis explains how to identify and target these two species of valuable point-scoring fish for species hunters

Scorpionfish are a part of the Scorpaenidae family, which includes many of the world's most venomous species. As their name suggests, scorpionfish have a type of sting in the form of sharp spines, which in certain species are coated with venomous mucus. The family is a large one with hundreds of members. Thankfully, the two species found in the UK are not venomous. That said, they should still be handled with care as, apart from being unpleasant, puncture wounds from fish spines can easily become infected.

The two species encountered by British anglers are the long spined and the short spined scorpionfish. The former is the larger of these with the current UK record held with a fish that weighed 2lb 7oz 8dr, caught in 1982 at Whitley Bay. The record for long spined scorpionfish was caught at Portland in Dorset. That fish weighed 283g, just under 10oz.

IDENTIFICATION

The long spined scorpionfish, Taurulus bubalis, has a large and noticeably bulbous head, with a small barbel in each corner of the mouth. The body tapers down towards the tail and has large pectoral fins located just behind the head. Colouration is usually mottled with pink, red and sandy blotches. Both fish are often confused with each other; however, the long spined is easily identified by two small white folds of skin known as lappets on each corner of its wide mouth. The short spined scorpionfish, Myoxocephalus scorpius, does not have these.

In addition, if you turn the fish upside down, the base of the gill cover membrane is attached to the body on the long spined scorpionfish, whereas on the short spined the gill cover membrane is free from the body.

Both species are fairly widespread around the British Isles, notably in rocky areas featuring a lot of seaweed. They are often caught when fishing small inshore wrecks. Most of the scorpionfish that I have seen have been caught when targeting other species over suitable ground, such as bream. These fish have been caught on a variety of different baits including fish, squid and various types of shellfish. That said, were I ever to deliberately try and catch a scorpionfish I'd most likely use ragworm, which is an effective bait for most mini-species. On several occasions on social media I have seen images of scorpionfish that have been caught using LRF tactics, using both mini-lures and artificial baits. ■

SEA SCHOOL

Our experts solve your fishing problems

Q&A

SHORE ANGLING

ASK THE EXPERTS

When sending your question, please remember to include your name and address

CHRIS KENNEDY

Chris is a specimen hunting specialist based on Sark and answers shore fishing questions.

DAVE LEWIS

Based in Newport, South Wales, our contributing editor Dave answers boat fishing questions.

DAVID MITCHELL

David is Sea Angler's editor and is an expert on sea angling policy and conservation.

HENRY GILBEY

Angler, blogger and photo-journalist Henry, based in Cornwall, is our lure expert.

BEN BASSETT

The Plymouth angler and blogger will provide answers on the sport of light rock fishing (LRF), the go-anywhere tactic.

BRIAN PASK

Brian is a qualified sea angling coach and casting tutor who works with young people and experienced anglers to improve their fishing skills.

Q When targeting bream recently, I hooked into a bass, which unfortunately threw the hook a few feet from the shore. When checking the rig, I could see the size 4 hook had been bent out of shape. Short of using a bigger hook, is there anything I could do differently to help increase my chances of landing a bigger fish on a smaller hook?

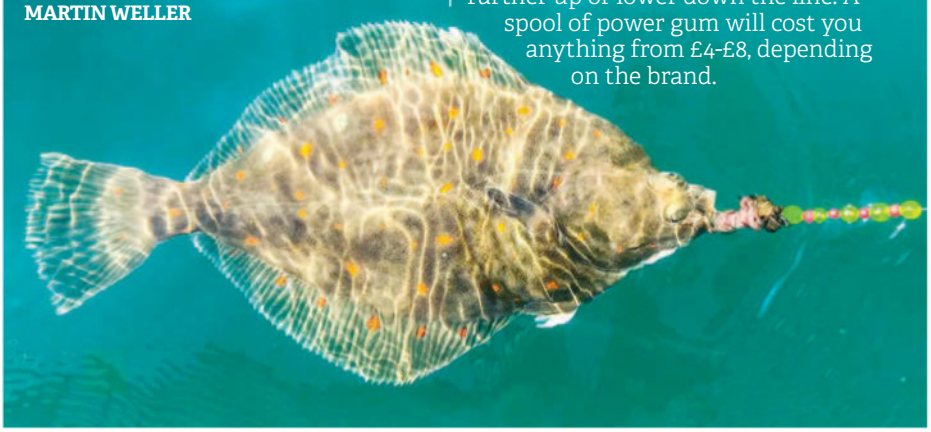
MICHAEL SUTCLIFFE

CK says: My opinion is that you can certainly use a larger hook size and a stronger pattern of hook, or both. Typically when targeting bream, the smallest hook I would use is a size 2. You won't miss the bream you are targeting by upping your hook size. Many anglers are happy to use a 1/0 when targeting sizeable bream for eating. As for the bass, they have enormous mouths compared to many species. If targeting bass specifically, I would use anything between a 1/0 and a 6/0. You match the hook to the bait you are using: smaller hooks for worm and larger hooks for larger fish baits. Keeping tension on the fish as much as possible is essential to reducing the chances of bass shaking free from your baited hooks. You can pick a stronger or thicker size 4 pattern, which will not bend under normal tensions, but there is no harm in upping hook sizes.

Q I am new to sea angling and want some help. I am thinking of targeting plaice and notice people commonly use beads as attractors. How do you keep the beads in place above the worm bait?

MARTIN WELLER

CK says: Power Gum is the best solution in my opinion. It's sold at most angling retailers and is now made by many brands. I personally use Optima. It is a supple, grippy line that comes in small spools of 6-10m. You can tie a stop knot above the beads and it holds them perfectly. You can also adjust it to suit the length of the bait by pushing it further up or lower down the line. A spool of power gum will cost you anything from £4-£8, depending on the brand.



Q I have just begun my pursuit of catching my first shore conger. Would you use traditional J hooks, catfish hooks or circle hooks? I see mixed opinions on forums.

STEVE LOCKE

CK says: My best advice would be to opt for either catfish hooks, which I use, or a traditional O'Shaughnessey J-pattern. Strong, sharp hooks are essential. Size 6/0s are pretty much my standard size, but I am seeking larger eels. You can drop a size or two if looking for smaller ones. Though I have had conger on circle hooks, I believe they are the worst option due to a reduced hook-up rate, and it's a real problem if an eel swallows an offset circle hook as they can be very difficult to remove. A useful tip is to strike your bites quickly to avoid deep hooking.

Q I have just bought 60lb braid from eBay that says it has high abrasion resistance and I am contemplating not using a leader. Would you advise this or not?

MATT PEACOCK

CK says: I would always use a shock leader for safety reasons, and one that is appropriate to the lead you are using. For example, with a 6oz lead use 60lb leader; 5oz lead, 50lb leader, and so on. While braids claim to be abrasion resistant, they are easily damaged by any rough or sharp object under the water. Once damaged, it reduces their strength and breaking strain. You don't want to break off during a cast, or while playing a decent fish. Monofilament leaders have vastly better abrasion resistance and are considerably safer.

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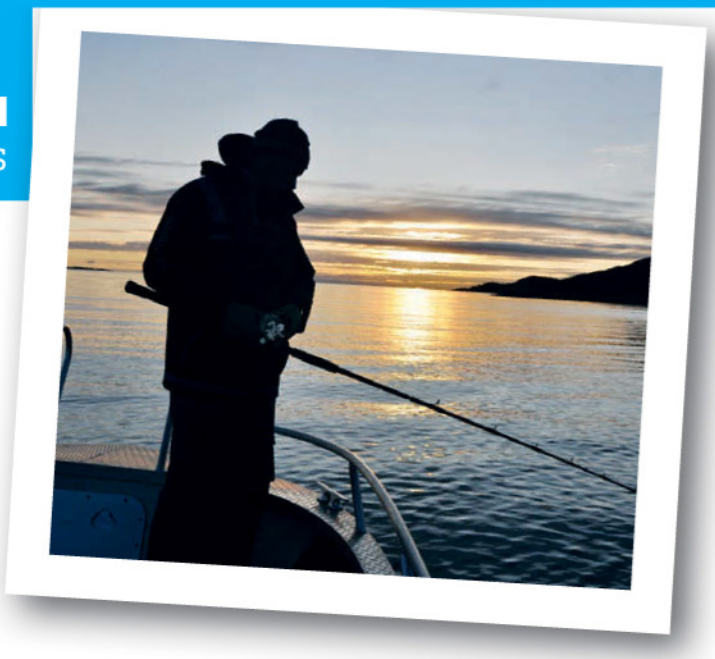
SEA SCHOOL

Our experts solve your fishing problems

Q&A

BOAT ANGLING



Q Is it possible to catch bream on jigs?

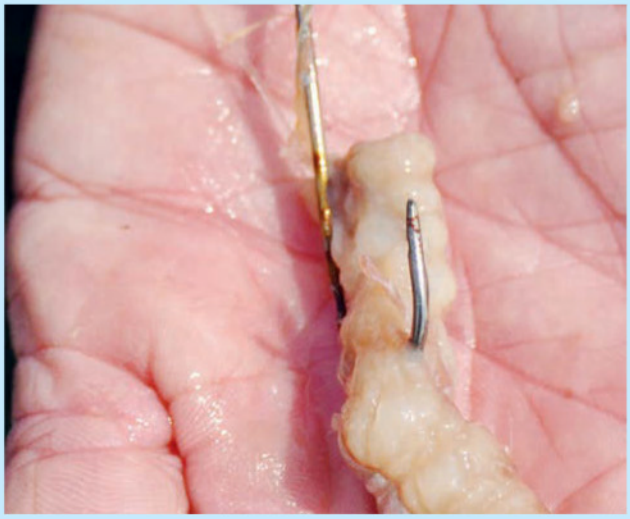
JOE HANLON

DL says: Bream can certainly be caught on jigs; I have caught several species including black, white, two-banded and Couch's when fishing in the Mediterranean. Modern Japanese-style jigs such as Shimano Doetera, Baku Baku and other similar lures, which are designed to imitate squid, are both effective and fun to fish on light tackle.

Q When we fish in Norway during the summer it never really gets dark. From your experience is fishing during this extended twilight period more effective than during daylight?

COLIN PARSONS

DL says: I have experienced good fishing throughout the day and night. However, at 'night' the wind often drops away to give beautifully calm conditions. Also, shoals of coalfish become very active at the surface during lower light levels. This invariably stimulates cod, coalfish and halibut to feed in the upper layers of the water column.



Q How do you tell the difference between pouting and poor cod?

JORDAN SMITH

DL says: Pouting, shown here on the left, are deeper bodied than the much slimmer poor cod, shown on the right. The easiest way to be sure is that, following handling, poor cod readily shed their scales, whereas pouting do not.

Q When rigging a mackerel bait for medium sized species, do you use a single hook or a Pennell rig?

GARY ABBOT

DL says: I use both, depending on which species I am targeting. When fishing for turbot and brill I typically use a single hook: this gives the bait plenty of action that adds to the attraction. When fishing for other species, such as rays, huss or spurdogs, I'll often use a Pennell rig baited, as shown, which provides a more compact, durable bait.

Q Can you recommend an affordable fixed spool reel that will be suitable for saltwater use here in the UK, plus be strong enough for an occasional lure fishing trip in the tropics?

MATT MURPHY

DL says: I have just returned from a trip to Madagascar, during which I extensively used a Shimano Spheros 8000 reel for both jigging and popping. The reel performed perfectly catching a lot of mid-size trevally, snapper, grouper and even sailfish. With a RRP of £234.99, and many tackle shops selling at much lower prices than this, this reel should meet your requirements perfectly.

Q When fishing abroad charter boats often concentrate on fishing FADs. Do you think it would be beneficial installing these in UK waters?

PETER FIELD

DL says: FADs, or fish aggregating devices, are hugely effective at concentrating populations of fish. They are widely used in deep water – 1000ft or more – specifically for attracting pelagic species such as marlin, tuna and dorado. They work by first attracting the smaller species which in turn attract larger fish, and so on, in exactly the same way a reef or piece of wreckage does. FADs could possibly work in some areas in the UK but, in all honesty, I think they would be no more effective than fishing bottom structure in our, generally, shallow waters.

Q&A

LURE FISHING

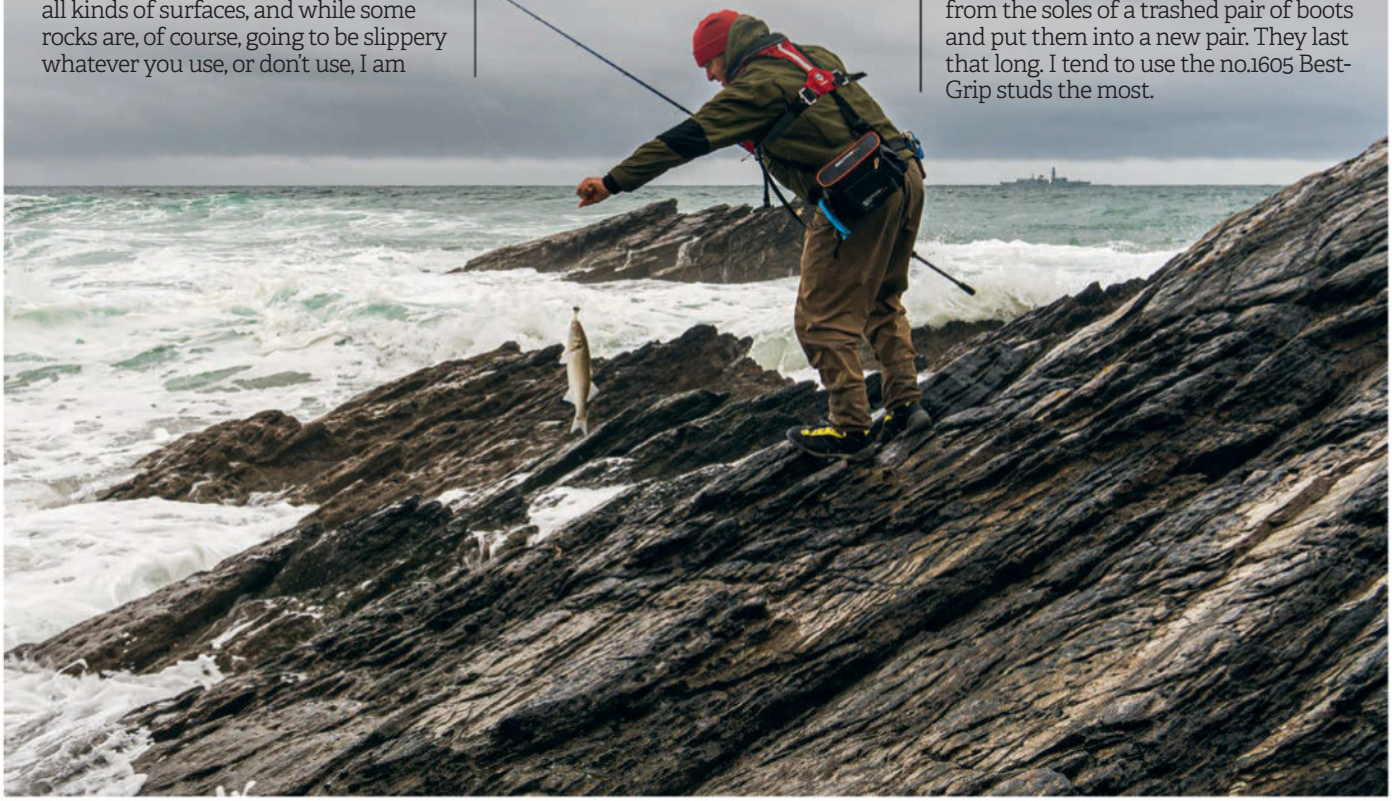
Q I am not sure about putting studs in my wading boots. Do you use them and what do you think?

PAUL NELSON

HG says: I wish I had known back then what I know now, put it that way. I think back to slipping all over the place on various rock marks when I used to wear hiking boots for my bait fishing. Oh how I wish I had known about wading studs! The simple answer is yes, I very much put studs into the soles of any boots I might use as wading boots. I want as much grip as I can get over all kinds of surfaces, and while some rocks are, of course, going to be slippery whatever you use, or don't use, I am here to tell you that decent studs in the soles of your boots are going to hugely increase how you can move around on rocks and weed more efficiently and safely.

There are any number of different studs you can buy to insert into the soles of a pair of boots. Look for what are often called "wading studs", but don't go spending a huge amount of money on the most expensive ones; they often don't last any longer if you fish on rocks all the time, especially. Some boots' soles "accept" studs better than others, and you need to be careful where you place the studs. In general, I would place the studs around the edges of whichever boots I am using. Put them in the middle and longer studs can come through the soles of some boots and end up puncturing the neoprene sock on the bottom of your breathable chest waders.

Over a number of years, I have found that the Best-Grip studs available in the UK are the best. I can put them in all kinds of different rubber soles and they provide excellent grip. They colour up over time and look like they are rusting away, but they aren't, and I have often been able to remove Best-Grip studs from the soles of a trashed pair of boots and put them into a new pair. They last that long. I tend to use the no.1605 Best-Grip studs the most.



Q Surely bass fishing with surface lures is the most exciting way to fish for them?

SHANE SMEETH

HG says: I hear this all the time and, of course, I understand the appeal of taking bass off the top; it's awesome! In reality, we have the one truly viable species which will smash lures fished on the surface, and when bass hit them it's so exciting; I understand completely why it's so addictive. Being able to see the lure working, and the fish striking, provides an added dimension to an already very exciting way to fish.

But I would say that in lure fishing the tug is the drug. It's that "hit" from a bass which excites me so much, and while surface lures give that added visual element, I love the hits I get on soft plastics just as much. When I am in the zone, fully concentrating and, out of the blue, suddenly get that jolt on the end of the line, I can literally feel the bass smashing into my soft plastic right through the rod and down through my arm; that's what really does it for me. How about when you get that sharp tap on a soft plastic you are twitching? Keep fishing it and a couple of seconds later your lure gets smashed. How good is that? Okay, so you aren't seeing a bass swirl and smash a lure off the top, but those feelings through the rod from an unseen hit are also hard to beat as far as I'm concerned!

Q I've had problems with soft plastic lures sometimes 'melting' in storage if I mixed them with others. How can I tell if lures are going to react with other lures and stop them melting?

NEIL COOTE

HG says: You will find that some specific soft plastic lures from companies such as Savage Gear and MegaBass, plus all the soft plastics from Z-Man, are made from what I believe is some sort of TPU (thermoplastic polyurethane) which doesn't play nicely with regular soft plastics. Lures from the likes of Z-Man are incredibly tough and very buoyant; a friend of mine had over 40 wrasse on a single Z-Man creature bait and he could still fish with the same lure the next session. What you do find, as you say, is that if you mix these lures with other soft plastics they end up literally melting together.

With any of these types of lures you need to keep them in the packets they came in and don't place them in lure boxes and/or mix them with other lures. Take a lure out of the packet, rig it and fish with it, then put it back in the same packet afterwards. The only advice I can give about finding out which soft plastics "behave" like this is to carefully read the packaging and also ask other anglers. I do think that tackle companies could sometimes do a bit more to make us aware how to (carefully) treat these specific soft plastics so we don't get any problems, but the information is there on the packets and tackle company websites if you go looking.

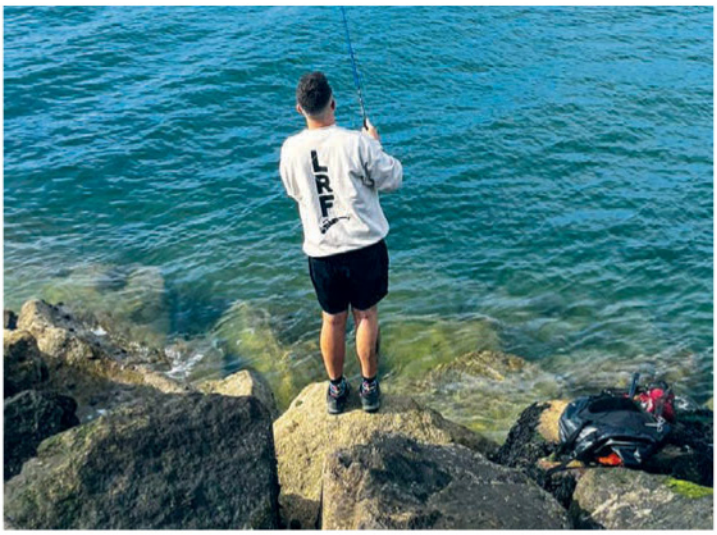
Q&A

LIGHT ROCK FISHING

Q How long would you keep a pot of Gulp/Isome for before it's past its best?

DAVID FORD

BB says: I still have some of the very first Isome that I bought eight years ago, and it still looks usable to me. I think as long as you top up the liquid over the years the artificial baits keep almost indefinitely. I will say I have seen anglers whose pots have gone brown and smelly, but it is hard to say exactly why. Strangely, sometimes Gulp and Isome going 'off' can be an advantage. I once left a pot of Gulp Fish Fry in my hot car, which resulted in them being slightly cooked in the sun. This led to them turning super soft and spongy. Although they were ripped off the hook easily, the fish absolutely loved them! I'm not recommending cooking your lures by the way, but it just shows how you can turn a potential loss into success.



Q What is the best way to LRF over a rocky breakwater?

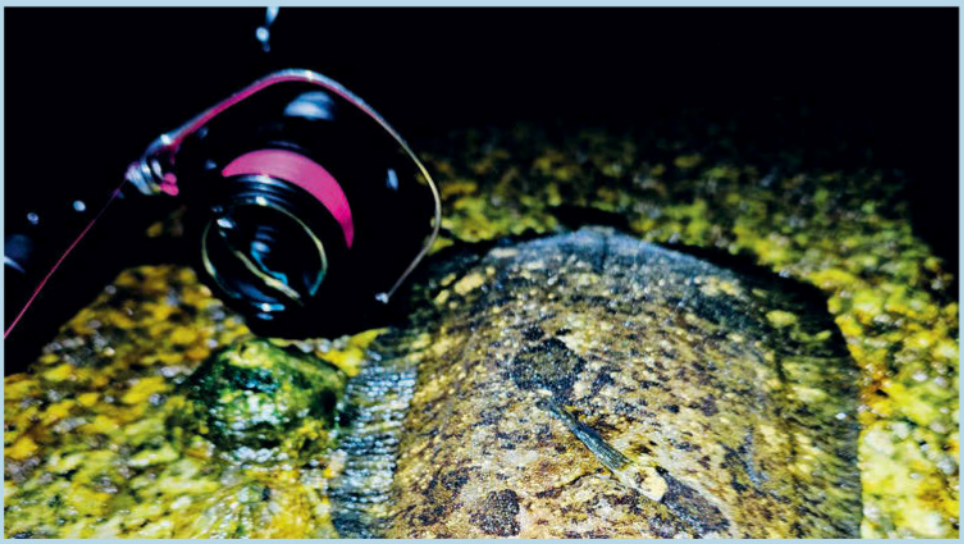
LEE BROOKE

BB says: Breakwaters surrounded by rocks and boulders are also some of the best LRF ground around. Boulders are snaggy, sometimes lifeless, but always surprising and harbour some amazing species. Although snags and break-offs are inevitable, there are things we can do to minimise these. Firstly, I like to tie a particularly long fluorocarbon leader, sometimes double the length of the rod I am using. This is to minimise the braid rubbing on the boulders, and if you are close enough to the water when you snag, you can grab the leader to pull it out instead of using the rod and braid, which are both more delicate. Other than metals, most of the usual LRF tactics work well amongst the rocks. My favourites are jigheads, chebs and dropshots, but others will also work well. Feel the lure down into the holes, try to do it slowly and keep in touch, then you can work around the snags. Be aware of different bite styles: many fish will nibble and pick up the lure without taking, while species like scorpion fish, topknot and larger ballan wrasse will give just one or two thuds. I love the lottery of the different gaps; one second you can be teased by a small blenny, then the next a giant ballan is steaming off with your lure!

Q Do you soak your braid before spooling?

CHARLIE SEBBAGE

BB says: Personally, no, but I know plenty of anglers who swear by it. I simply ensure the braid goes on very tightly, usually by restricting the spin of the plastic spool with my hands or feet. You can also run it through your fingers but this will burn after time with the friction. The best advice I can give with braid is not to over spool it: this will lead to wind knots and ruined sessions.



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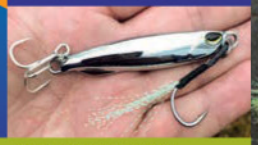

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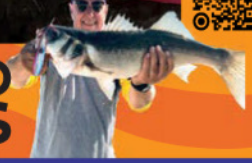

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CUB SCOUTS HIT THE BASS JACKPOT!

By Brian Pask

This month Sea Angler's coaching expert **Brian Pask** gives a flavour of the variety of work a sea angling coach does: from working on a pendulum cast to helping neurodiverse kids, and a Scout session that turned into one of the best night's fishing as a coach he can remember

It's been a fairly slow month for me, partly due to a family holiday and partly due to some peculiar conditions on the beach – it's certainly been a strange year already in terms of weather!

I have run a few casting sessions which I always find great fun and I get to see an instant impact with increased casting distances. When I am working with people on casting it's not distance that I focus on; a strange statement to make, maybe, but I need to get the client to focus on honing technique first. Get this right and distance will follow. This was particularly evident when I met up with Dean for a session. The wind strength turned out to be much worse than the forecast – I shouldn't have been surprised! There was a very strong westerly straight across the beach. Dean was using a Century T900 but, by his own admission, was not getting the best out of it. We started work on his off-the-ground cast and progressed onto a pendulum. He really worked hard at getting a smooth swing – not an easy task in that wind – and by the end of the session was looking very smooth. As always, practice after a session will help imbed the lessons learned.

I advise very strongly that, although being able to cast long distances is a good tool, you need to use your fishing brain to find the fish as they could literally be at any distance – including under your feet!

While on holiday I could not resist taking my granddaughter out for a short lure fishing session. After a few casts through the gullies between the rocks, she decided that running the lure through rock pools was more fun! Who am I to argue with the client! Interestingly, whilst messing around in the rock pools we spotted what I believe was a tiny pipefish – a rare spot for me as I have only ever seen them in an aquarium before.

I also had two separate sessions with young lads, one with autism and one with ADHD. We had a fantastic time in spite of some high winds. One of the boys was rewarded with his first ever catch – an

eel. We have plans to set up a small group to accommodate similar youngsters as angling has a proven positive impact on mental health of various types.

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

While much of the month was quiet, that certainly could not describe my final session before writing this. I had been asked to run a session for a Cub Scout group. In total 14 youngsters aged from 10 to 14, of which most had not held a rod before, arrived at the beach where I had already set up rods and reels for them all. Most rods were also baited as the group came across the shingle. With the help of one of my youth group and a parent, we assisted the cubs in casting out. I had four rods left to help out when a shout of "BRIAN!" could be heard above the waves. I turned to see one rod bent almost double and a young lad struggling to reel in. With a little help he beached a superb looking bass that was around 3.5lb. This was the start of complete mayhem for the next 90 minutes. My name continued to be screamed out by young voices as there were bites across the length of the beach. Decent sized bass were being brought in, hooks rebaited and lines cast back out so quickly that the 90-minute session disappeared in a flash.

This was undoubtedly one of the best night's fishing while I have been coaching and to see the joy on the kid's faces as they caught their first ever fish was something I will always remember. The session ended with at least seven bass over 3lb plus several smaller ones. Of the 14 young anglers on the beach I think 11 caught fish.

"I had four rods left to help out when a shout of "BRIAN!" could be heard above the waves..."

COMMON COURTESY

There was, for me anyway, a bit of a sour note to the evening. There were two adult anglers fishing around a hundred yards away from us – they were already there when I started setting up so I ensured I kept a reasonable distance from them as a matter of courtesy. The excitement generated by my group was obviously heard by these two and they must have seen the success we were having. They stowed their kit and proceeded to walk across the beach underneath some of our rods at which time they were asked not to. They continued across the beach and set up their kit again no more than 15 yards up from our last set of rods. Personally, I find this very rude as I think we should respect other anglers and ensure we give each other a reasonable distance. I would be interested in other people's opinions on this subject!

I refrained from speaking to them as I was in charge of a group of young people and wanted to set the best example to them. I must admit to having a smile to myself as whilst I was packing away the gear after the kids had gone because the duo still failed to connect with any fish! ■

COACH BRIAN'S FIVE-MINUTE CASTING CLINIC

This month we look how to improve your Brighton cast with easy tips to improve your techique and take just five minutes to practice

Having started with an overhead thump last time, let's look at pushing your lead out further with the Brighton cast.

Hopefully my message about having a rod you can bend has hit home – 'bend it to send it' really is true! That matter sorted, let's get on with the cast.

The Brighton cast is an easy way to get compression in your rod with no extra effort and, in many cases, less effort than the overhead thump. How can this be I hear you ask?

The answer is "high inertia"! Let me explain. We need to store energy in the rod that can then be released and used to propel the lead. When your rod is bent the rod is loaded with potential energy in the same way as, for instance, a spring or a bow.

To bend the rod, the lead must be moving slower than the rod itself. The lead must also remain inside the arc of the rod. If the lead moves outside the arc made by the rod, it loses compression and the cast will not reach its full potential.

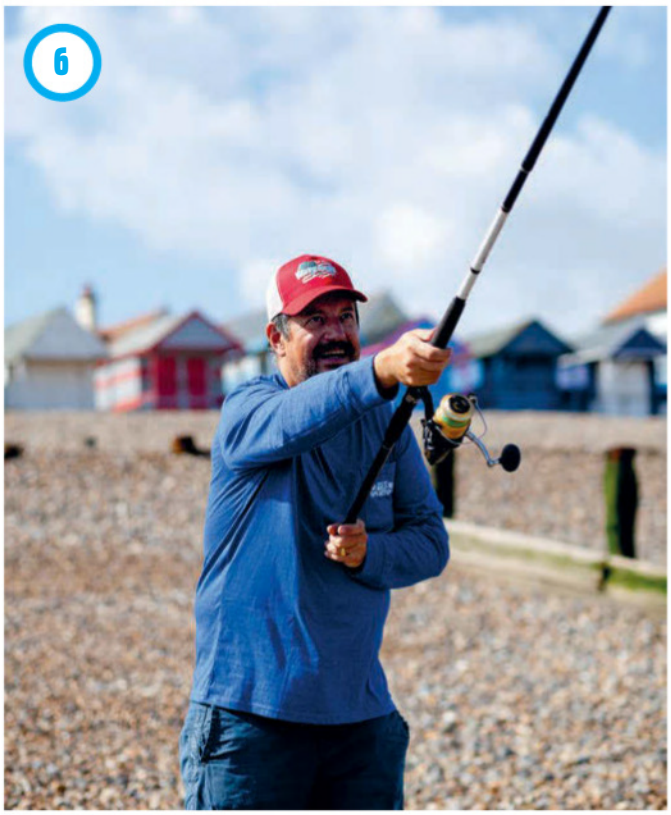
Place your feet at 90 degrees to the sea then move your left foot back a few inches.

With the rod at 90 degrees to the sea, swing the lead out, then back towards yourself (gently), then land it on the beach near your feet. Starting with the lead at your feet behind you creates compression and loads more energy into the rod which will be released as distance.

With the rod tip as low as you can get it, and the butt high, make sure the line between your rod tip and lead is taut. This allows the rod tip to be bent instantly when you start the cast and having the butt high will allow you to pull down at the end of the cast, putting additional power into it.

Move your arms up and over your head, letting go of the line as the rod passes your right ear. Strange as it may seem to those starting out in the sport, you need to slow down your arm movement at the start of the cast but force is required at the last moment, especially with the left hand pulling downwards sharply.

The length from lead to rod top is a personal choice but should be at least the length of a rig when practicing. Try different "drop lengths" until you find your sweet spot, then use a mark on your rod so you can find the right drop every time.



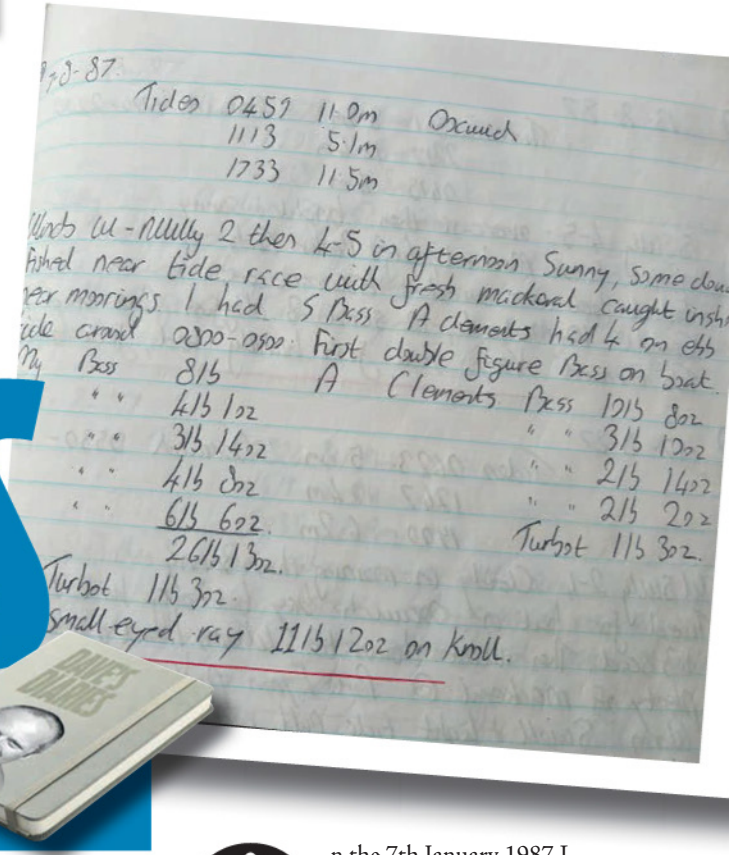
Look up and out; aim for a point at approximately a 45 degree angle into the sky. The lead should follow your line of sight.

Remember, for left handers left and right is reversed!

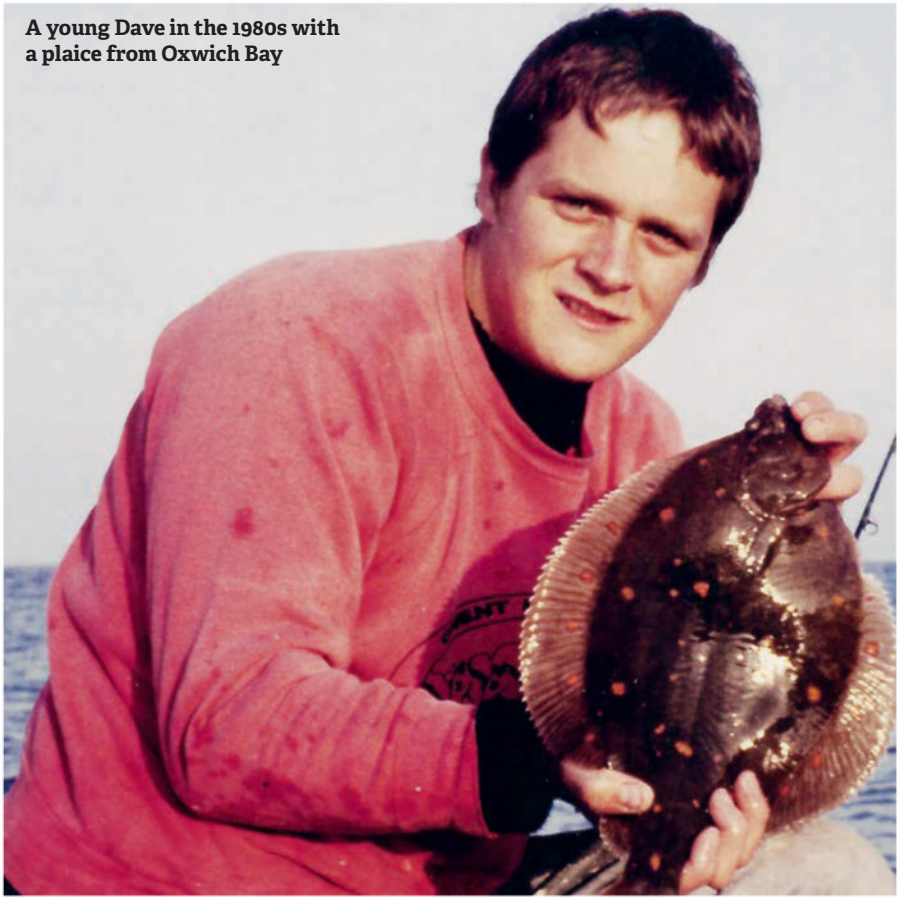
Words and pictures
DAVE LEWIS

DAVE'S DIARIES

MY FISHING LOG


Tides 0451 11.0m Oxwich
1113 5.1m
1733 11.5m
Fished near tide race with fresh mackeral caught inshore moorings. I had 5 Bass A clements had 4 on etts
tide crawl 0300-0500 First double figure Bass on boat.
My Bass 8lb A Clements Bass 10lb 8oz
4lb 1oz 3lb 10oz
3lb 14oz 2lb 14oz
4lb 8oz 2lb 2oz
6lb 6oz Turbot 11b 3oz.
26lb 13oz.
Turbot 11b 3oz
Small eyed ray 11lb 12oz on knoll.

Dave Lewis takes a fascinating look back over his fishing logbooks when, for many years, he meticulously recorded every boat session in order to identify a pattern and figure out the peak tides for fishing his beloved Bristol Channel



A young Dave in the 1980s with a plaice from Oxwich Bay

On the 7th January 1987 I made the first entry into a fishing diary. It became a catch log that I maintained for many years, exclusively for trips aboard my own trailered boats, not charter boat or shore trips. In the early years these were aboard my first boat, a Barry Bass Boat called 'Teal', then from November 1988 onwards aboard the first of my Orkney Strikeliners, 'Alison.'

Aside from the desire to keep an accurate record of fish caught, the primary objective in starting this log was to try and understand the affect different size tides had on the areas I fished. Back in those days my fishing from April through until late October was primarily based around the Gower Coast, having launched at either Oxwich Bay or Knab Rock at The Mumbles. Then, throughout the winter when the focus of my attention switched to cod, the majority of my trips were either within Swansea Bay or further east up the Bristol Channel around Penarth and Barry.

As you may be aware, the Bristol Channel has the second highest tidal range found anywhere in the world. Unsurprisingly this massive twice daily flush of water has a huge impact on where and when fish feed. Each entry started by listing the times of both high and low water for both tides that day. This was important as it provided a record of whether the tides were increasing or decreasing in size: that is, building up to springs or dropping back to neaps. I always recorded them in order to maintain continuity and the heights were based on the Swansea scale.

Next, I recorded the time I fished, along with the prevailing weather conditions. A brief description of areas fished followed, plus a note of which baits were used and, of course, fish caught. Any other points of note or more general observations were also

recorded. Further, in the front of the book I maintained my 'species list', a record of all UK species caught during that time, but this included fish caught at other locations.

PEAK TIDE

After a few years I could start to see a pattern emerging, allowing me to identify which had been the most productive tides to fish. It became clear that the optimum tides to fish were between 11.2 and 11.8m Swansea scale, which equates to mid-range tides. These size tides fished well during both a rising and falling sequence, but those that were rising towards a spring were the very best. Eventually I concluded that the ultimate tide to target was 11.6m, on a rising sequence. For the record, a spring tide at Swansea is one measuring over 12m, with a neap having a height of roughly 10.5m or less.

Over the years my work with fishing has allowed me to travel far and wide in pursuit of sport. It has been noticeable how even when fishing frozen seas in the Arctic north or deep blue water within the tropics, more often than not, the very best days fishing during a trip will fall within the exact same tidal range. At many destinations around the world sport fisherman pay great attention to, and focus upon, the various moon phases, with the periods leading up to or following either a New Moon or Full Moon being favoured. Both these moon phases produce high spring tides, so it is interesting to note that my personal observations fishing off the coast of South Wales mesh perfectly with almost everywhere else I have fished.

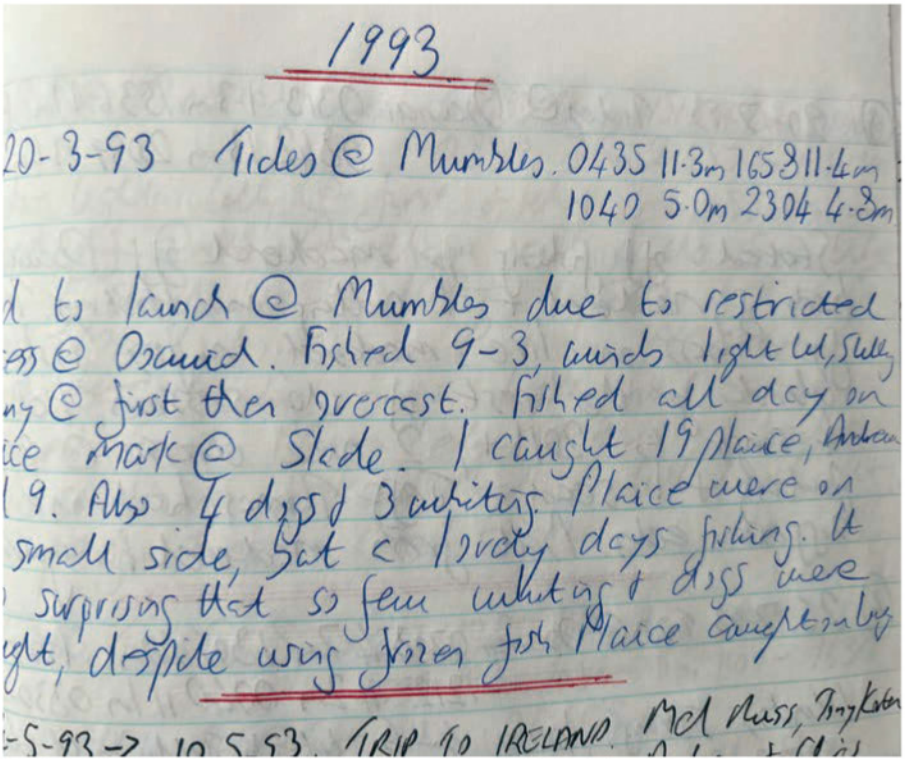
Reading through my log almost 30 years since my last entry I have noticed several points of interest, aside from the fact that my writing is terrible, and spelling not that much better! Firstly, not every day we fished was a good one; even fishing back then we used to not infrequently have a very quiet day afloat. Next has been the changes in species caught, notably the demise of those such as cod, whiting and plaice. It is also noticeable that there is little mention of other species that are so prominent today, species such as smoothhounds, blonde rays and spurdogs. Most interestingly when talking about the numbers of bass, I'd say fishing back in the late 1980s and early 1990s off the South Wales coast was pretty much on a par with what anglers experience today, with the exception of a decline in the average size of fish. Numbers of bass in excess of 5-6lb have certainly declined locally.

END OF AN ERA

The very last entry was on the 18th December 1995. At the time I had been working as a contributing editor for Sea Angler for two years, and increasingly my work was taking me all around the British Isles and beyond, writing features based upon trips aboard charter boats or from the shore. Married with a young family and a full-time job something had to give, and ultimately that had to be my personal dinghy fishing. I did run my own boats for a few more years, along with a couple I had on extended loan from a few different manufacturers, but I fished my old favourite fishing grounds less and less.

Back in the 1980s and 1990s – bass in the summer, cod in the winter

Looking back, I think I actually became burnt out with the small boat angling scene. The pressure of running my own boats always with the view to writing an interesting article simply became too much. Further, without fishing locally on a regular basis I became increasingly out of touch with the local boat angling scene. By the end of the last millennium I had ceased running my own boat. I loved my years fishing from trailered dinghies and researching this article, and reading through my fishing log, has brought back many wonderful memories. ■


1993

20-3-93 Tides @ Mumbles. 0435 11·3m 1653 11·4m
1040 5·0m 2304 4·3m

d to launch @ Mumbles due to restricted
ess @ Oxwich. Fished 9-3, winds light LI, Sully
ny @ first then overcast. Fished all day on
ice Mark @ Slade. I caught 19 Plaice, Andrew
19. Also 4 dogs & 3 whiting. Plaice were on
small side, but a lovely days fishing. It
surprising that so few whiting & dogs were
ght, despite using prawn for Plaice caught by

-5-93 -> 10.5.93. TRIP TO IRELAND. Mel Russ, Tony Kaiser

ALL ABOUT THE BASS

Robin Bradley reports back from a bass symposium where sea anglers were given the opportunity to contribute to cutting edge science and future management of UK bass fishing

Last November, Dr Anna Sturrock approached the Bass Anglers Sportfishing Society (BASS) about a proposal to get funding for a one-day symposium about bass at the University of Essex.

The idea was partly to share early results from the 'Supper4Science' project which we had worked with the university on, along with other aspects of bass science, and partly to provide an open forum to discuss science needs and future strategies for data collection and monitoring with some of the key 'stakeholders'.

BASS members, both individually and collectively, have contributed to our increasing knowledge of bass biology and we have long supported scientific research on this. The idea of a symposium, where the latest bass science could be shared by leading scientists from the UK, Europe and Ireland, while at the same time bringing scientists, anglers and policymakers together to co-develop ways of working together to provide data and evidence to improve the management of the bass fishery, was right up our street.

And so, the planning began. Zoom calls and numerous emails to discuss the programme and arrangements followed. Finally, on 8th July the 'All About The Bass' symposium was held at the University of Essex. Of the 75 people who attended the symposium (both in person and online), 27 were anglers, 31 were scientists and 12 were policymakers or fishery managers.

MAIN TOPICS

The symposium showcased new and emerging bass research, covering such topics as: bass biology; movements and habitat needs; stocks and spawn timing; the impacts of climate change and shifting distributions; and the importance of citizen science. As well as an update on the Bass Fisheries Management Plan (FMP), topics covered how to improve scientist and angler collaborations and how data can improve policy and management.

KEY POINTS

- **Even with a very modest number of bass retained per angler, given the number of anglers involved the cumulative mpact on the stock was significant**
- **Angler records clearly demonstrate a dramatic fall in the percentage of larger fish over the years.**
- **Bass spawning is occurring outside the February and March fishery closure period designed to protect bass while spawning.**
- **Much of the habitat which is important for juvenile bass has been lost over the years.**
- **Bass Nursery Area boundary lines and operational periods should be revaluated to take account of the movements of juvenile bass.**
- **Bass may move between different stock areas in their feeding and spawning migrations, and this may have significant consequences for management.**
- **Adult bass can spend months in fully freshwater, with adult bass caught and tagged 150km inland – about 80km upstream of the tidal influence – in the Tagus River in Portugal, and preliminary accounts of freshwater bass in Spain, France and the Norfolk Broads.**

If you have caught bass in fully freshwater you can let our Portuguese colleagues know scan the QR code or visit acesse.one/freshbass

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Anglers are enthusiastic and ready to engage in science.
- We need clearer frameworks and mechanisms for co-produced science.
- All stakeholders should be included from the start of research to build trust and relationships.
- Anglers want to see results and outputs from research they're involved in.
- Traditional knowledge and anglers' stories are invaluable data sources.
- More and regular collaborative forums are needed that include all stakeholders (including both recreational and commercial fishers).

WORKSHOP

The theme for the afternoon workshop was 'Who, how and where are we monitoring bass, and how can this be improved?'

In part one participants recorded fishy stories: catches in unusual places, changes in catches and what types of data was being collected – such as catch recording, juvenile fish surveys. Potential barriers to anglers participating included concerns over sharing information about fishing and doubts about how or whether the data would be used in improving management. In part two participants considered ways in which we could increase collaboration between scientists and anglers on the provision of data.

GREAT TO BE INVOLVED

It was great for BASS to be involved from the outset in planning and delivering the symposium, along with Essex's symposium coordinator Clare Connell. This was a great opportunity to hear about the latest in bass science and come up with ways of anglers providing data and evidence in partnership with scientists to improve management of the bass fishery.

It was nice to see our contribution to bass science recognised in several of the presentations, which also included research findings which reflect some of our concerns and should help to move the dial. This was also a useful platform for anglers to voice concerns to scientists and those in a position to influence management and policy, and to develop good links with them.

FEEDBACK

100 per cent of attendees who have given feedback have suggested that the event should be repeated, 80 per cent of anglers said they were more likely to participate in research, and 84 per cent of respondents said they learnt a lot.

You can view the talks on YouTube https://tinyurl.com/BassConfVideos or download the presentation slides https://tinyurl.com/BassConfSlides. A full report of the symposium, with findings recommendations and research opportunities will be available in the coming months.

If you would like to keep in touch with the organisers you can contact Dr Anna Sturrock via email anna.sturrock@essex.ac.uk and the BASS Science Group via email sciencegroup@ukbass.com

Words and pictures
JIM WHIPPY

NEW SERIES EXCLUSIVELY for Sea Angler!

Whippy's WORLD

Despite now being in his eighties, the passion for sea fishing still burns as bright as ever in former international shore, boat, match angler and species hunter Jim Whippy who starts a new monthly column exclusively for Sea Angler readers

RECORDS BY MEASUREMENT

At last, the British Record Fish Committee (BRFC) have decided to set up a separate record fish list that doesn't require the fish to be killed. There is now no reason to bring back boat caught fish to be weighed on land, as they can now break a record by measurement alone. This needs to be carried out in a proper way with photos and video evidence, but I consider this a real breakthrough allowing some brilliant fish to set records but to be returned alive. Check the BRFC for full details of how to claim a record for the new list.

BACK AFLOAT

After a frustrating time with our Raider 18 'Lucky Git', after being towed in by Eastbourne lifeboat when our main cut-out switch shorted out, I finally got back on the water. It felt great to be afloat again after the engine was serviced and the bottom scraped and anti-fouled. On the first trip the boat just flew along using considerably less fuel, as we were not pushing a barnacle covered hull along. Part owner Ross was with me and we decided to bag a few mackerel and settle down on a favourite mark about six miles offshore. Our target was tope but that didn't work out. Instead we had a conger, several bream and some quality mackerel. It was just a taster to prepare us for the summer, when it eventually comes!

The next day I was back on the beach fishing for black bream. That was not a great success for me as all I had was two undersized ones while just 70 yards along the beach, club member Les pulled in a double shot, both weighing over a pound. This is pretty unusual along our beaches as they can be hard to find. It also meant he

First bull huss of the year

Ross bags a conger

"I keep a comprehensive record of catches from both boat and beach spanning nearly 60 years and there have been some massive changes in our catches. Not all are bad with our beaches producing far more bigger fish than in the past"

had gone another species ahead of me in the Anderida club species trophy that I currently hold and am under severe pressure to retain. A total of around 18 to 20 species is usually enough to win it.

CHANGES

I keep a comprehensive record of catches from both boat and beach spanning nearly 60 years and there have been some massive changes in our catches. Not all are bad with our beaches producing far more bigger fish than in the past. It changed slowly to start with as our standard catches of pout began to dwindle. We then had whiting arrive in ever increasing amounts with catches of over 20lbs needed to win a three-hour beach comp. Then around six or seven years ago the dogfish arrived along with a few thornback rays. Now to win a competition it can be a dozen dogfish or even a couple of rays to be in contention. Then, in February this year, 18 thornbacks were weighed in in one competition.

Some people will say that's not unusual, but it is extremely unusual, as our club records will show that dogfish and rays didn't figure in match results at all seven years ago. Going back even further, winter competitions were won with six or seven whiting for around 3 to 4lbs. The past few years have also seen more and more smoothhounds caught and they have got bigger and bigger. They have also changed their diet as they would only take crab at one time but recent matches where crabs are banned there are smoothhound taking lugworm and squid. The point I am making is these fish were not here back in the 1990s as everyone used lugworm but didn't catch them, apart from a very rare occasion.

TOO MANY BLANKS

Back to the fishing: my next three trips on the shore resulted in one plaice, two undersized wrasse and several spider crabs. The May rot was particularly bad this year and has stayed longer than normal making fish tough to find. Then I suffered two blank trips until at last a day when a few fish decided to bite. Two decent black bream, a sizable gilthead and a nice plaice gave me some belief that there are still some fish in the sea. A few days later saw Ross and I were out again in Lucky Git enjoying a shortish session catching tope, a few bull huss, bream and, once again, some nice mackerel. We were fishing close to the Royal Sovereign light tower that is being demolished. Already the accommodation block, light and heli-pad have been removed and just a bland concrete column is left. The tower was such an iconic construction and will be sadly missed by all the small boats who used it as a reference point.

The mackerel shoals should soon be showing up on the Eastbourne beaches as they drive the white bait ashore. Then it will be hard to find a space on the beach as the world and their families descend on Langney Point to fill up their buckets, carrier bags and even dustbins with prime mackerel. ■

Lucky G

Words and pictures
PHILL WILLIAMS

BRINGING THE RECORDS INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

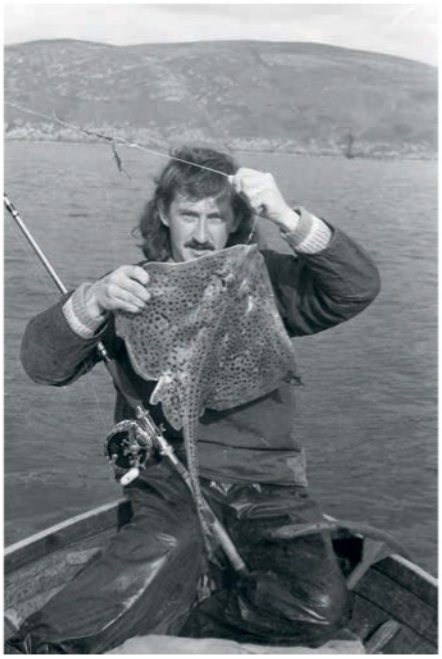
Last month the British Record Fish Committee (BRFC) made a historic announcement that claims for record fish will now be accepted on the length measurement of fish rather than weight, promoting catch & release and consigning over 100 years of weight-based UK boat records to history. BRFC committee member Phill Williams explains this monumental change to sea angling's UK record list, and how you can now make a length-based claim

When I first tried my hand at sea angling back in the 1960s, the peak achievement for most participants, myself very much included, would be to catch a British record. It didn't get any better than that; the pinnacle of angling success, and nor did it happen to all but a very fortunate few which I assumed (incorrectly as it would turn out) would never include me. I therefore set myself a different target, that of catching 100 species of record listed fish from British waters. one of these was the cuckoo ray; a small deep-water species which I had occasionally seen in Scottish waters, the record for which happened to be held by a friend of mine, Scottish International boat angler Neil McLean, who lived on the Isle of Arran where he fished from his own boat. With this target in mind, arrangements were made to anchor in deep water at the back of Holy Island where Neil had taken his fish. The worst that could happen would be getting 'plagued' by haddock and cod. But sometimes you just have to grit your teeth and take your punishment!

As expected with such a rare species, the name cuckoo ray unfortunately was never destined to appear on my achievement list. However, I did catch a ray that day, and a rare one at that. One very much rarer than either myself or Neil would appreciate at the time. A textbook perfect sandy Ray (Leucoraja circularis) with its rounded wing tips and six creamy blotches, weighing in at 11lb and some ounces putting it well short

LEFT: Tope in a weighing sling – no matter how careful, on-boat weighing can never be accurate

The fish that started it all: a sandy ray caught off the Isle of Arran in the early 1970s



Phill Williams with a record British & Scottish spotted ray in the 1970s

of the standing British record at the time. So, with a few photographs in the bag, back it went, with no more thought about it until later when I read that the BRFC had carried out a purge removing several dubiously identified records, of which the sandy ray was one, throwing all the vacated slots open to claims with minimum qualifying weights. The problem was that, as my fish had fallen way short of what had been previously listed, when I became aware of this, all the necessary evidence was swimming around somewhere at the bottom of the Outer Clyde.

OVERSIGHTS

Fast forward to 2009 and I'm sat browsing the British Record Fish List when I suddenly get the urge to look up the sandy ray to see where its record had ended up, only to find both the boat and the shore slots both remained open to claims, each with a minimum qualifying weight. In other words, the record list was displaying a species which had yet to be officially taken on rod and line. On that basis one could argue for the inclusion of other unrecorded species. The reality was that this had come about through a house-keeping oversight of not deleting the inclusion when the previous incumbent had been removed, prompting me to dig a little deeper for other historical oversights carried forward into BRFC's 'modern era'.

For me, the most worrying of these relates to a problem dating back to 1986 and the acceptance by the committee of the day of a boat caught common skate record of 227lb, which, despite there being a rule stating that all fish must be weighed on solid ground, was weighed from a boat gantry with the lowest of three recorded readings submitted and accepted. A problem which in 2009

'sorted' itself out when research was published showing that, as a species, the common skate (Raja batis) is, in fact, two similar related species known as blue skate and flapper skate, thereby invalidating the record on the basis of lack of evidence as to which of the two species the 227lb specimen actually was. A long since bettered stingray record was also weighed aboard a boat. And it didn't end there. Scientific studies suggest that all smoothhounds at our latitude, spots or no spots, are in fact starry smoothhounds, and in any event, short of an invasive post-mortem, few, if any, anglers would have the expertise to distinguish between the two. All of which prompted me into producing a formal written presentation, including a few modernisation suggestions regarding approaches other than weight for records which I sent to the BRFC, sadly without receipt of acknowledgement.

Fast forward once more to 2015 when I was persuaded by the then BRFC Chairman Mike Heylin to record an audio interview for my podcast archive, giving me the opportunity to put some of those historical topics to him and garner his thoughts on how he saw the future of record keeping, enquiring how, in its current incarnation, record keeping could still be seen as relevant when, increasingly, anglers seem happy enough simply to grab a quick photograph, backed up by a few statistics to post on social media, and release their catch, even edible species, with no desire whatsoever to even consider killing a fish simply to ascertain an accurate weight and have their name in a record list. Many anglers these days detest weighing their catch, preferring instead simply to measure its overall body length. Unfortunately, when it comes to angling records, weigh as a representation of size has become so ingrained into the recording psyche that trying to move to any other measure has been seen as maybe too radical. The need to retain a boat caught fish to weight it accurately on land in order to make a record claim meant that only a minority of anglers were prepared to claim records they had clearly beaten.

Measuring a small tope with a wet rag over its eyes to keep it calm

"Increasingly, anglers seem happy enough simply to grab a quick photograph, backed up by a few statistics to post on social media, and release their catch, even edible species, with no desire whatsoever to even consider killing a fish simply to ascertain an accurate weight and have their name in a record list"

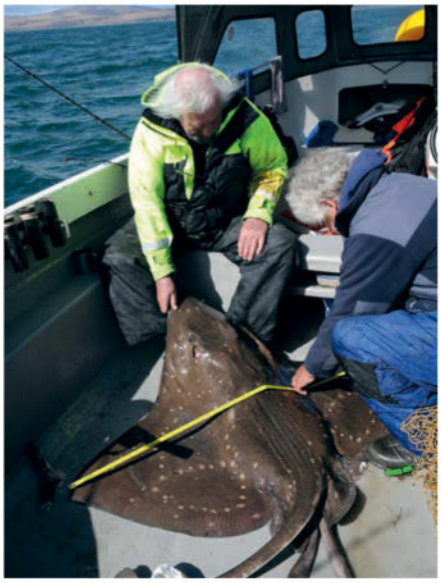
SHARKS & RAYS

For a number of shark and ray species, retention is now illegal. In effect the boat records for these species are frozen anyway, requiring an alternative approach with catch & release at its core. While anglers are not barred from deliberately targeting protected cartilaginous species, including the two protected large skates and tope, handling stress has to be minimised and the fish returned immediately at the point of capture after measurement, photographs and disgorging. And while, for example, large skate caught in Scotland have for decades had their length and girth measurements fed into a weight estimation chart, with an accuracy variability of plus or minus of 5 per cent, there is, unfortunately, no one-formula-fits-all solution for the sharks due to their wide range of body shapes and proportions. Having weight records for boat caught fish is no longer fit for purpose and therefore angling and the BRFC had no option but to change.

While a range of potential solutions were pondered over by Mike Heylin, me and others, discussions never really came to much. My favoured alternative to weight was (and still is) to multiply length by girth to generate a points score. Fatter or longer fish would score higher in exactly the same way as they would if put on a set of scales. Mike, as I recall, wanted to keep things simple by going for body length. What we did agree on was that urgent change marrying the needs of anglers to those of the conservationists, legislators and fish recorders had to be out there somewhere and would eventually be agreed. Other organisations such as the International Game Fish Association and Shark Angling Club of Great Britain had already grasped this nettle, in both cases opting for Mike Heylin's overall body length approach. That it seems was where the consensus lay. What anglers would make of it might prove to be another matter.

With the Mike Heylin audio recording in the bag, another handful of years of status quo slipped quickly by during which I continued to keep an interested eye on the

Sharks like this porbeagle will now need to be correctly identified and dealt with in the water



Measuring a common skate with metal tape. You need soft tape for true accuracy

A 900lb six gill at the boat. You couldn't get it in a boat even if you wanted to!

BRFC, both for further house-keeping anomalies, and to see if any of my earlier suggestions had been picked up on and deployed. But nothing. Around the same time I also became deeply involved in putting together what would turn out to be an enormous archive volume documenting the history of British sea angling during the twentieth century, copies of which in 2020 went to amongst others, Sea Angler Magazine and Mike Heylin at the BRFC for their respective reference libraries, the pages of which contained the 2009 presentation sent to the BRFC 11 years earlier which Mike read and immediately got back to me on, apologising for not having done so sooner as nobody on the committee was even aware of its prior existence. A read which led to him exercising his chairman's prerogative of inviting me onto the committee to help identify, and assist in steering, any agreed or necessary changes through.

With the BRFC meeting twice yearly, expecting or even hoping for urgent consensus on such a wide range of topics in the short time remaining after new record claims and other business had been dealt with by what is a diverse group of participating angling and fishery related individuals, was always going to be a recipe for slow progress.

With this in mind, Andy Nellist and I were tasked with looking at the modernisation of the list and, in particular, finding and enacting a workable replacement for weight. In this endeavour we spoke at length by telephone every week and continue to do so now resulting in a number of changes being made with the momentous final decision taken at the June 2024 meeting of the full committee being to introduce length records for the first time for the main sea species list. ▶

CHANGES MADE IN THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS TO THE SALTWATER RECORDS LIST INCLUDE:

Phill's Scottish ballan wrasse boat record – returned unclaimed. Had length measuring been in place it would have been claimed

- **Recognising the part played by charter boat skippers in putting anglers over fish, their name and that of their boat will be given equal prominence to that of the angler being awarded a record.**
- **Minimum qualifying weights for future vacant shore records are removed. The biggest example regardless of size is the record.**
- **Recognising that there are two large skate species previously displayed together as common skate. For reasons of problematic identification, conservation and legal considerations, one record only will be displayed under the title 'common skate'.**
- **Recognising that, at some future date, the common smoothhound (Mustellus mustellus) may turn up on rod and line. For reasons of conservation due to problems of precise identification, from herein, only one species is recognised under the name smoothhound (Mustellus asterias).**
- **Recognising that there are potentially two angler fish species in British waters. Due to a requirement for invasive examination to ascertain precise identification, only one inclusion will be made under the name of the larger species as angler fish (Lophius piscatorious).**
- **As of June 2024, all saltwater boat records previously based on weight are suspended and will continue to be displayed for historical purposes only with an invitation issued for length records for all species to be submitted. Shore angling records can be claimed based on either weight or measurement, or both.**

To prevent the committee becoming inundated with claims for the more common species, potential records must reach or exceed a minimum length given in a list of temporary qualifying sizes which is now published on the BRFC section of the Angling Trust website. The first length records will be the largest example for each species both boat and shore submitted by 31st May 2025 and subsequently accepted at full committee level. Following that meeting, minimum size requirements will be dropped.

As the intention here is to encourage catch & release, it will be the responsibility of the claimant to provide suitable film evidence (typically using a smart phone) of a standard allowing positive identification of the species in question to be made. Film evidence will also be required of the measuring taking place. On a beach, and in a boat, this should be done by laying the fish on top of a wetted soft material or plastic metric measure, with a second subsequent photograph of the same metric tape measure laid alongside the fish to be sure that when the measure was previously underneath the fish it was not shortened to gain an advantage. Measurement shall be the whole length of the fish from the tip of the snout to the extremity of the tail. Measurements in a boat or on the shore will be rounded down to the nearest whole centimetre. The measurement for skates and rays will be wing tip to wing tip, and for skate the length of the fish should also be recorded.

In addition, for record purposes, the following fish must not be brought inside the boat and will not be considered for shore record status – sharks: blue, porbeagle, mako, thresher and six gilled; bluefin tuna; sunfish.

If, by some chance, one of the above is caught from the shore no separate shore record will be declared. These species are a combined record only and must be measured while remaining in the water for subsequent release, even shore-caught specimens. Fish measured in the water will be rounded down to the nearest 10cm marker. Again, the process must be filmed for submission along with the tape measure used. This film must also include a record of those features necessary for positive identification. Obtaining an accurate snout to tip of tail measure with thresher sharks may well prove problematic and might need to be revisited in the future. The BRFC has also made it clear that failure to demonstrate a reasonable level of fish welfare while handling potential record fish may result in the rejection of a record.

To assist in all of this I have produced a guide to fish identification and suggested photographs specific to each inclusion to help anglers get their released records over the line.

This will shortly be published on the BRFC section of the Angling Trust website.

RECORD LISTS

MINIMUM QUALIFYING LENGTHS

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WESTIN SPECIAL

FIRST LOOK

The last 12 months has seen Scandinavian specialist lure brand Westin launch a series of new saltwater products in the UK. The response from anglers has been superb. Here's the Westin story and a selection of their new lure fishing products

The company is now over 70 years old and started with Ingvar Westin – a highly talented toolmaker and wood carver – creating 'swimming' fish shaped toys for his children. These toys eventually morphed into some of the most successful fishing lures Sweden had ever seen.

With a very strong brand that is now well known, and well respected, in the industry for high quality, stylish lure products, their latest move is designing items specifically for the UK market, and there is plenty in the pipeline for the next two, or more, years.

The saltwater lure market continues to grow each season; it seems to be gaining huge attention from both specialist anglers and general holidaymakers. Westin's most recent launch includes a new weedless variation of the iconic Sandy Andy lure, and the F360 SBASS - a long range metal lure with a host of design features to suit the UK market including specialist colours and single hooks geared towards catch and release.

These slot into Westin's line-up perfectly and complement their best-selling products of the last two years, such as the Sandy Andy lure, W3 Seabass rod, W10 Coastal braid and W6 Sunglasses range. Keep your eyes peeled for new product launches from Westin, their quality, attention to detail and styling is a perfect fit for the UK market.

For more information on Westin and all its sea angling products visit **www.westin-fishing.com/en**

SANDY ANDY WEEDLESS

New for 2024, the Sandy Andy weedless comes in three sizes and eight colours including some of the old faithful best-sellers and a selection of new colours too. With amazing quality detailing, a custom super-sharp EWG hook and soft body for a perfect swimming action, this lure has hit the ground running with some superb catches.

To accompany the clip-on-and-cast full lures, multiple options are also available in blister packs. Spare hooks and spare bodies all sold separately allow anglers a range of purchasing and rigging choices.

- **10cm–16g - RRP: £4.99**
- **13cm-22g - RRP: £5.99**
- **15cm-32g – RRP: £6.79**

F360 SBASS

The F360 SBASS has been re-vamped for 2024 with a number of key features for the UK bass scene. Four sizes are available – 16g, 26g, 32g, 42g – and eight colours including three new 'realistic' colours: Real Sprat, Real Mackerel and Real Sandeel. The lures feature a strong, sharp single hook mounted on a twin split ring system at the rear, and an assist hook at the front which is perfect for better hook up ratio when fishing this bait 'on the flutter'.

W10 13X COASTAL BRAID

Again, Westin have pushed the boundaries when it comes to product design and incorporated a huge number of hi-tech features in this premium braid. Spun from the most advanced Japanese Ultra High Molecular PE fibres, with 12 carriers precisely woven around a central core strand to create and maintain the roundest profile for reduced friction on the rod rings and long, accurate casts. Many brands fail to state their weave (or PIC) rate, but Westin have gone for the pinnacle with 56 weaves per inch creating a tight, round, abrasion resistant braid that is unbelievably smooth. Then the 'coastal' technology comes from a double layer of Dura-coat, creating a super smooth hydrophobic surface that resists water absorption, creating longer casts and reducing wind knots, perfect for saltwater anglers.

- **RRP: £39.99 (150m)**

W3 SEABASS ROD

Westin have spent decades building their reputation in two categories: lures and rods. It's therefore no surprise that the W3 Seabass rod is a superb tool at a fantastic price. With three models available all in the same casting range of 12-42g, the different lengths cover a variety of applications. The 8ft 4in version is perfect for boat fishing, estuaries and topwater fishing when more control and less distance is required. The 9ft 1in version is the perfect all-rounder, and with a fast action it is suitable for metals, soft plastics and hard baits alike. The 10ft version is the long-distance beast when maximum casts are required or extra leverage needed to keep fish out of spots with heavy weed cover or snaggy ledges.

- **8ft 4in – £129.99**
- **9ft 1in – £139.99**
- **10ft – £149.99**

W6 SUNGLASSES

Entering the market in 2023, these have been a great success due to the styling and features available for a great price point; they are jam packed with technical specifications to bring comfort, safety and clarity to your vision. With six 'Street' styles and six 'Sport' styles available, every models boasts high quality safety (anti-shatter) polycarbonate polarising lens with additional Japanese polarising film, UV400 rating filter to exclude damaging UV-A and UV-B rays, lightweight and comfortable frames and anti-reflective inside costing. They are supplied with a hard case and high-quality lens cloth, these glasses are pu punching above their weight.

- **RRP: £79.99**

Words and photography by CHRIS KENNEDY

CLIPPED DOWN CLASSICS

Century's media manager **Chris Kennedy** explains his preferred choice of the various release systems on the market for clipping down rigs

If you're relatively new to sea angling, and you're curious about the various release systems, how they work and when they should be used, then this will help you avoid many months and sessions of trial and error. When I started sea angling, I did so using a simple lead with a clip for your hook, which worked ok, but innovation, and the evolution of the sport continued, and I began to experiment as new systems came out that made fishing easier and more effective.

Firstly, having your baited hooks clipped down probably isn't essential if you are the type of angler lobbing 25 to 30 yards in calm conditions using a simple paternoster or running ledger. However, if it's windy, or you're trying to get further out, you'll notice that an unclipped bait will spin in the air or just travel with a lot of drag because the bait is away from your lead. This is when you'll need to start clipping down and making sure your rigs are as aerodynamic as possible; you'll add some serious yards with a bait that stays clipped.

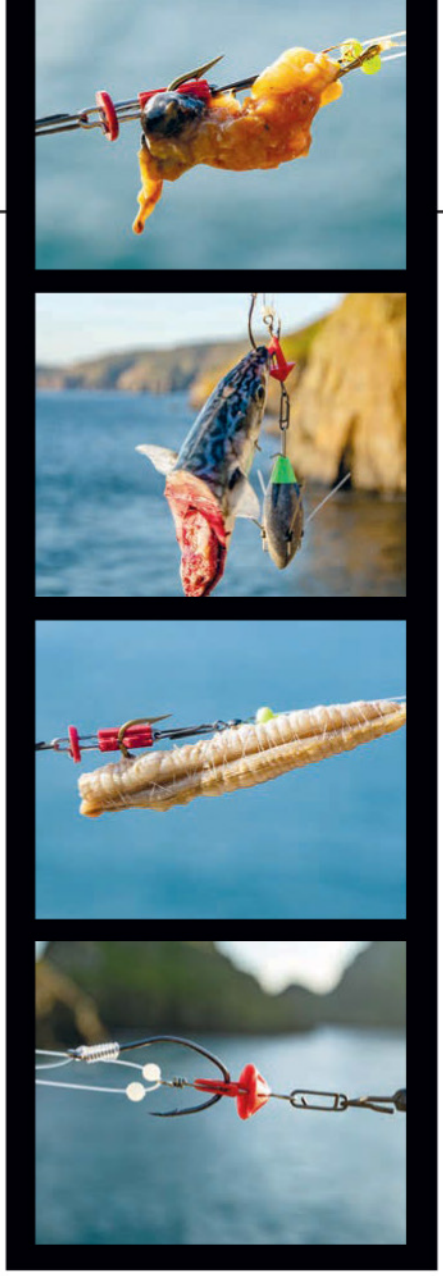
Your first port of call, and cheapest way of clipping down, would be to buy simple unbranded leads from someone local, who makes them with an internal clip. However, just like the bait clips sold in packets, they often let the bait unclip or come loose while in mid-air or whilst you lay it on the beach for an off-the-ground cast. Both situations can be frustrating, or certainly sub-optimal. If you are power casting, your bait presentation may not be great by the time the rig reaches its destination, which will ultimately mean fewer fish for you.

SPLASH DOWNS

What most anglers commonly do is buy a Breakaway Impact Splash Down lead; I am sure you've all seen the yellow-capped 5oz and red-capped 6oz leads at your local tackle shop, or photographed many times in this magazine. These grip leads were a massive game changer for sea anglers at the time of their release. The way they work is that

you clip the hook, and as the lead hits the water and sinks, the coloured cap pushes up, releasing your bait so it's away from the lead and ready for the fish to bite. These are pretty damn good, but they still do come unclipped in mid-air at times; they're not perfect. They cost a little more than your ordinary leads, and I think it's worth it.

If you're into power casting or have aspirations of hitting bigger distances, your next option is the Gemini Splash Down system. They have a sliding system where you slot your hook in a gap, which is then locked in place when the clip is pulled down, making sure it cannot be released until the system hits the water and the hook is released. They are very streamlined, sit above the lead and connect to the rig and are either tied on directly or via a quick link. They are a fantastic piece of innovation, and they come in a blue



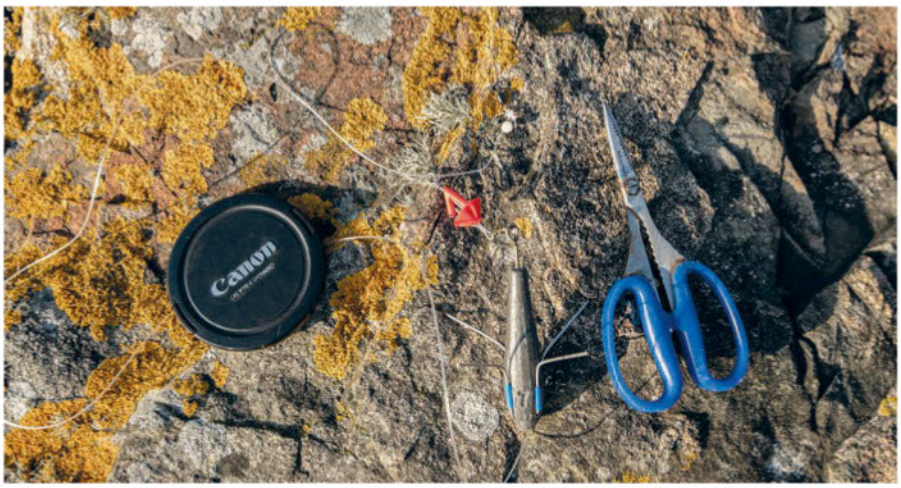
version for smaller hooks and a red version for larger hooks like 5/0 and 6/0. The only drawback here is that sand and grit can get stuck in them and, occasionally, I have found that they don't always release over that type of ground, which obviously is less than ideal. The trick is to ensure that they are always moving freely at the point of you locking your hook into the system and rinse them well so that they are ready for the cast. I think they're great, and I have plenty in my tackle box for the clean to mixed ground marks. They cast beautifully, and they're ideal for medium, long-range anglers. It's worth noting that Gemini sells this system built into a lead or separately to sit above a lead on your rig.

OTG

If you're a big bait angler, and you are launching baits out for tope, big blondes or common skate, and you're using larger, stronger hooks than will fit in the Gemini system, then you certainly need to look at the Breakaway OTG Impact system, which is a fail-safe release mechanism. This system again sets the baited hook free when the lead and system hit the water and begin sinking. It will accommodate very large hooks, like a Mustad 10/0 bronzed O'Shaunessey. They are perfect for the popular catfish hooks or larger circle hooks that anglers use in the southwest of England. I have never had one fail on me; they always unclip, and again, they are lovely to cast with minimal drag on the air. For the specimen hunters, these are excellent. The only thing I do find is you'll sometimes bend the metal over rougher ground, pulling through rock and kelp. However, it's easily reshaped with pliers and returned to full working order. Overall, it's a great product.

Usually, when writing these reviews I explain which is the best in their class, or I review one piece of tackle individually. In this case, all options are relevant depending on your budget, the conditions, casting range, venues, rigs and fish you are targeting. I will always use the Breakaway OTG system when I want no chance of a rig coming unclipped in the air. They are excellent for use with pulley rigs and up-and-over rigs, where distance and bait presentation are important. ■

- **Breakaway Impact Lead: £1.80 - £1.89 (5oz or 6oz)**
- **Gemini Splash-Down Solo: £3.20 (red or blue, 5 in pack)**
- **Gemini Splash-Down Lead with system: £2.30 (5 or 6oz)**
- **Breakaway OTG Impact Red: £3.25 (4 per pack) or £3.35 luminous option**



Words and photography by LIAM GUNN

GETTIN' JIGGY WITH IT

Liam Gunn has been loving putting Seadra's Aqua Drop range of slow pitch jigs to work. Here's his verdict on whether you should have a flutter on them too

Slow Jigging has gathered significant attention in the UK sea angling scene over the last few years. You could argue that it has existed for a much longer period in the form of pirking with 30-50lb class outfits.

These days, however, there is a considerable range of eye-catching slow jigs which are built to attract not only the anglers' attention but prove to be a lucrative method for attracting a variety of species over a range of different grounds.

The real benefit to this method of fishing is that you are replacing your stiff and heavy boat outfits with much more balanced tackle – this can range from medium-heavy spinning outfits to more purpose-designed slow jigging outfits with small, high-speed multipliers paired with 20-35lb fine diameter eight-strand braid and a light fluorocarbon leader of around 30lb.

Using a set-up like this means that you get more feel at the business end and you are able to manipulate your jig more accurately and get a fantastic action out of the lures. The second benefit is that you are really able to enjoy fighting the fish – the more conservative catch & release anglers will also be able to release fish caught from deeper water as there is a smaller chance of barotrauma due to the incredibly balanced setup – you can't just simply horse them up like you might do on more traditional set-ups!

After a few trips out using some Aqua Drop slow jigs from the Seadra range I have come to understand just how devastatingly effective this method can be. I'm going to delve into the design, performance, usability and overall value of these jigs, providing a comprehensive evaluation of their place in the modern, thinking angler's tackle box.

DESIGN AND BUILD QUALITY

The first aspect that stands out about these jigs is their meticulous design. There are many colours to choose from, ranging from very realistic mackerel colours to other baitfish species. Each jig is crafted with a hydrodynamic shape allowing it to mimic the erratic movements of injured prey, which is highly enticing to predatory fish. The jigs are available in a wide range of colours – from blue, silver, cotton candy, to rhubarb & custard, alongside natural bait fish imitations, meaning you can find the perfect pattern to suit your chosen target species. My favourite so far is the very natural looking blue or green mackerel 'Slowey Joey' which very closely mimic the real deal; so much so that on a recent boat trip a large gannet chased my jig believing it was an injured mackerel.

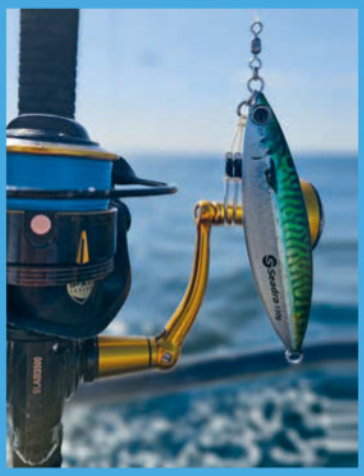
They come in various weights between 80-200g, accommodating different depths and combatting strong tides and swell. These jigs boast a robust construction, utilising high-

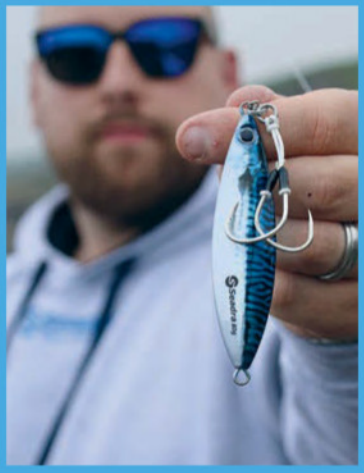
quality split rings, hooks and durable paint that ensure longevity. The razor-sharp, high-quality hooks hit home every time!

The bodies of these jigs have the necessary heft while maintaining a compact profile to quickly cut through tide, reaching and staying in the kill zone. I have found this balance to be crucial for achieving the desired slow, fluttery fall that is often when a predatory cod, ling or pollack will take.

PERFORMANCE

The Aqua Drop range was designed specifically for catching bass. However, these jigs excel in attracting a wide range of other fish species





too. Wrasse, pollack, cod, ling all find these jigs irresistible. The slow, fluttering descent of the jig mimics the natural motion of a wounded baitfish, triggering predatory instincts, or a territorial response from fish such as ballan wrasse. It's great fun: you never know when you're going to get slammed! However, it isn't just lunkers that these slow jigs attract – they are great for scoping out species on a range of grounds. I have also caught lots of unusual by-catch such as dabs, plaice, mackerel, coalfish, pouting, jumbo scorpion fish, haddock, whiting and cuckoo wrasse on them over mixed ground, fishing inshore around the east coast of Scotland.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The range of jigs are appropriately priced and the superior design, durability and performance justify the cost. You can expect a long lifespan from these jigs, even with frequent use. The reduced need for frequent replacements adds to their overall value, making them a cost-effective choice in the long run.

In addition to their price point, the success rate of these jigs in attracting and landing fish contributes to their value. Their effectiveness has translated into more productive fishing trips and, ultimately, I have always had fun pitching these jigs – you just never know what's going to hit next!

FEATURES:

- **Fast drop to reach target area quickly**
- **Asymmetric design**
- **Deadly fluttering action**
- **Razor sharp assist hooks**
- **Choice of over five colours**
- **3D Live Design on Blue & Green Mack colours**

- **RRP: £8.50-£12.99**
- **www.veals.co.uk**

WIN A SONIK BLACK BASS FISHING SET-UP

Three lucky Sea Angler readers can win themselves a super Sonik SKS Black Bass rod from Sonik Sports, complete with a SKS Black Surf Reel and a spool of 18lb Ultrasonik saltwater monofilament

WORTH £150

The SKS Black Bass rod is a new addition to the SKS sea range, much improved on the previous SKS Black models, featuring K-style guides, a more powerful blank and yet incredibly light.

This little rod is set to buck the trend in bass and estuary fishing. It's a powerhouse of a rod, yet exceptionally sensitive on bite registration. At 11ft 8in (two-piece) it casts like a dream and is suited to either fixed spool or multiplier reels.

Dressed in K-style, braid friendly guides and a custom Sonik 'Slide-Lock' reel seat, the SKS Black Bass offers exceptional value for money at a wallet saving £89.99.

To match the rod we also have the SKS Black Surf Reel 8000 and a spool of quality Ultrasonik saltwater monofilament.

Don't miss out on the chance to win this fantastic prize. Simply enter free online at...

www.seaangler.co.uk/win

Terms and conditions: Entries close at 23.59 on 11/09/2024 the winners will be drawn on 12/09/2024. The winner will be notified within 28 days of the close of entries. The draw is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Entry is free and open to residents of the UK aged over 18. Employees of Kelsey Media and their family members are not eligible to win. Only one entry permitted per person, no bulk entries will be accepted. There is no cash alternative and the prize is not transferable. If contact cannot be made with the winner an alternative winner may be selected If any prize or product is lost or damaged during the course of delivery to the recipient, Kelsey Media will provide reasonable assistance in seeking to resolve the problem. However, it will not always be possible to obtain replacements for lost or damaged goods, and in that event, no financial compensation would be payable by Kelsey Media or their affiliates. We reserve the right to cancel the competition, if circumstances change that are beyond our control. By entering you agree to be bound by all the rules and agree that your surname and country may be published if you win.

BOAT STORE

KAWASAKI LAUNCHES THE ULTRA 160LX-S SEA ANGLER

Kawasaki has unveiled a new model of its jet ski range designed exclusively for anglers. The new Ultra 160LX-S Sea Angler is specifically tailored for fishing and the range comprises six craft across the LX and LXS series.

The Ultra 160LX-S Sea Angler features a powerful, normally aspirated four-cylinder, four-stroke engine delivering 152PS, based on Kawasaki Ninja technology. Equipment on the new style of Jet Ski includes a 7-inch Garmin Echomap UHD2 which excels in detecting fish with a top-class sharp and clear sonar while offering navigation from recorded routes.

For storing bait or your catch, the 160LX-S Sea Angler includes a large Orca hard cooler set in to the rear of the craft. It also has built-in fishing rod holders. A specially designed seat has also been incorporated for maximum comfort during fishing trips.

ACCESSIBILITY

There is a growing trend amongst some angers to use much lighter craft when sea angling; there are a wide range of RIBs and SIBs on the market which allow anglers to access fishing marks which bigger boats can't access. This includes estuaries and some rocky coastlines where some great fishing can be enjoyed, including bass and pollack which love to patrol some of the more inaccessible places around our coastline.

Like the rest of the 2025 Kawasaki jet ski range, the Sea Angler model is offered with a comprehensive package of genuine Kawasaki accessories allowing users to up-spec their craft to match their own personal requirements.

KEY FEATURES:

- **Launch control and power mode selection**
- **Electric start**
- **7-inch TFT instrumentation with smartphone connectivity via RIDEOLOGY THE APP**
- **Electronic cruise control**
- **LED accent lights**
- **Front fishing rod holder**
- **Rear rack with multi-purpose storage packs and four fishing rod holders**
- **Functional storage featuring an easy side-access storage space**
- **Large fuel tank capacity (21.1 gallons)**
- **ULTRA deck (extended rear platform)**
- **Special colour and graphics**
- **7 inch Garmin Echomap UHD2 with excellent sonar capabilities**
- **Large Orca hard cooler with built-in rod holders**
- **Flat two-section fishing bench seat with specially designed seating for easy movement and access to gear – always vital when actively angling.**
- **Added floats for stability and use as footrests while fishing**

The 2025 line-up also includes the Ultra 160 and Ultra 310 series, both in LX and LXS models, which offer enhanced comfort, state-of-the-art instrumentation and innovative features like the Kawasaki Smart Reverse with Deceleration (KSRD) system.

Jet skis have not always been angler's favourite crafts and it's the first time a model has been designed specifically with angling in mind. They are well worth a look if you want a more versatile way of getting to some of the more inaccessible angling spots, or just want a platform you can easily launch and retrieve. The Ultra 160LX-S Sea Angler will be available in the UK through Boats.co.uk, Kawasaki's official UK distributor.

SPECIFICATION:

- **Engine: 4-stroke, DOHC, four valves per cylinder, 4-cylinder inline**
- **Propulsion: 155mm jet pump, axial-flow, single stage**
- **Overall Length: 11.75ft**
- **Width: 4.133ft**
- **Height: 3.88ft**
- **Weight: 1056lb**
- **Seats: 3**
- **Fuel capacity: 96l**
- **Load capacity: 496lb**

- **RRP: £14,363**
- **kawasakiwatercraft.co.uk**

spooligan

FOREFRONT FISHING PRODUCTS

Grippa Butts
Rod butt security cups for double & single rods - fits bass, estaury & standard rod butts

£15.99

Holsta
Sea fishing tools organiser, fits onto seat boxes and Adapta

£19.99

Grippa
Rod security cups for double, single and low diameter rods

from **£8.99**

Deedle
Dongle rig bait up tool to make streamlined neat baits

£9.99

Riggle
Double Rig Hanger compatible with Hex

£2.99

Hex
Tripod anchor and rig clips works well with Riggle

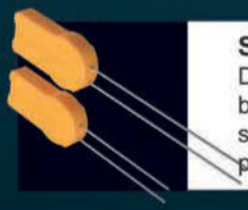
£5.99

Ding
Dongle rig bait stops. Also available in mini size

£2.99

Adapta
Accessory mounting bracket. Perfect for Holsta

£12.99



Skewa
Double prong bait needles in stubby and pennell sizes

£3.99

Capcha
Smart phone holder, for seat box or with Adapta

£7.99

Dock
Accessory stowage bracket, for Holsta, Adapta or Capcha

£4.99

Spool Tidy
Controlled line dispensers. For 4oz & 0.5kg spools

£2.50

The full Spooligan range is available from **www.veals.co.uk**
Wholesale accounts available contact **sales@spooligan.co.uk**

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Words and photography by TIM MACPHERSON

THE HYDRUS H7: ULTRALIGHT BOAT FISHING

Tim Macpherson travelled to Newhaven in Sussex to get out on the water in the new Hydrus 7 SIB from Inflatable Boat Fishing

The old saying goes, 'there's nothing new under the sun', but the current trend towards using a small inflatable boat as a fishing platform has really taken hold. Turn the clock back 50 or so years, to the days before marinas, when boats had to be kept on moorings, on a trot or ashore; there were no other alternatives. Every boater who kept their boat afloat on a mooring needed a tender, and many of these were either pram dinghies, conventional small dinghies or inflatable boats.

AFFORDABLE

However, in recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in small inflatable boats (SIBs) as fishing platforms. Modern production processes have made good inflatable boats affordable and their build quality reliable.

NO TRAILER REQUIRED

The beauty of an ultralight boat lies with its portability and ease of stowage; these are two of the fundamentals to consider when choosing a boat like this. It needs to be light enough that one man can launch and retrieve it solo, even on a beach launch. Those same criteria apply to the outboard: it needs to be light enough so that one person can carry it, even over awkward ground.

A SIB needs to either stow in the boot of an ordinary car or be light enough that it can go on the car roof. The whole essence of ultralight boating is that no trailer is required, however convenient towing may be. A well designed and put together package has the ability to go five miles offshore or 10 miles along the coast. Speed isn't an issue, as the kayaks have proved, and at 6-8 knots a small inflatable has a wide stretch of coast available within an hour, which is perfectly acceptable.

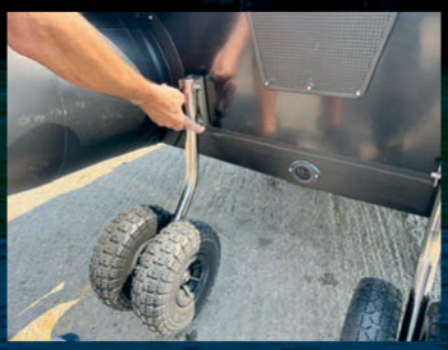
With all this in mind, I was pleased to get an invite from Carlo Lupi, owner of Inflatable Boat Fishing. He designs his own fishing inflatables specially for inshore anglers, manufacturing them in China and importing and selling them through his website and Facebook page.

I've known Carlo for a number of years, not least because I've reviewed his boats when he started out in 2018, and I've been out on his popular meet-and-greet SIB events launched from Newhaven. We picked the perfect day to test the latest Hydrus model out – calm and very hot – again, launching from Newhaven Marina

PORTABILITY

The Hydrus 7 SIB is very portable; it'll fit easily in the back of most decent sized cars packing down into foldaway bag of 1m x 60cm x 40cm and weighing just 80kg. It took just 10 minutes or so to inflate using an electric pump. This SIB is made up of five compartments: a floor section, a front, two sides and the keel.

Once inflated it is easy to pick up and manoeuvre – they come with detachable wheels on the transom. We then moved it down the slipway using a trolley attached to the prow. It's so light and easy; with heavy duty carry handles on both sides and front you could pretty much launch it anywhere without the need for a slipway. We attached a 9.8hp Tohatsu 2-stroke outboard to the transom – perfectly adequate for a boat this size.



DECK SPACE

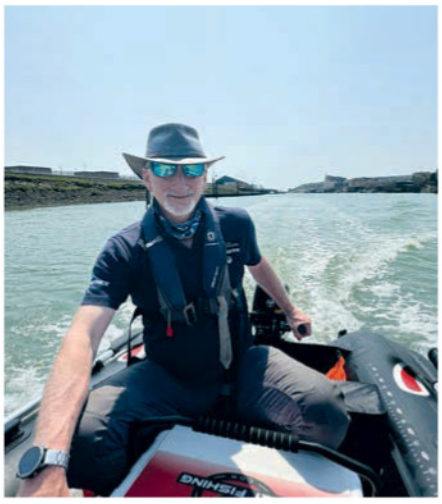
With a SIB like this you have to be quite selective about what kit you take with you. Along with the fuel tank, which was strapped into the front of the SIB, we managed to load up two rods, a portable Garmin fish-finder, a tackle box and a cool box. It was cosy but even for a six-foot bloke like me I found it quite comfortable. You do really feel close to the water, similar to a kayak. The fish-finder transducer fits to the transom with a Railblaza system and doesn't interfere with the engine if fixed carefully.

STABLE & COMFORTABLE

I'm used to fishing in bigger craft, mostly 5m plus boats with high freeboards, although I have done a bit of kayak fishing in tricky waters both in Wales and in Panama. One always feels a bit vulnerable at sea in a very small craft but I felt completely safe and stable as we motored down the River Ouse and out in to the Channel.

We met a dredger on the way out which produced a bit of a wake as it worked the river channel, but the SIB bounced over the swell without alarm. Then, once up on the plane, we managed to move along at about 10 knots. The 5cm lift in the bow helped spread any splash away from the boat so we were kept dry.

I tried out on the tiller and found the boat easy to manoeuvre around in the estuary. We then motored out to sea a couple of miles and cast a line or two. Despite the cosy nature of the SIB it was rock stable and casting movement didn't disturb it. The key thing with SIBs is to keep it simple and not take too much gear. The portable fish-finder fitted snugly between us in the deck and even when we swapped ends (always a tricky manoeuvre!) the boat barely moved.



The boat comes with Railblaza rod holder stations buried into the side panels which helps keep rods out of the way when in transit. More can be added to order if required. All in all, I found it a very good fishing platform. I can well imagine using this to mosey about in some of the Cornish estuaries I love fishing in – particularly because it'll make it much easier to get really close to some of those rocky marks with submerged boulders. Plus, when hunting up-river for giltheads in shallow water I can imagine sneaking up quietly. A suitable electric engine would fit very well onto this SIB and reduce the noise - essential when stalking fish in shallow water.

POWERFUL ENOUGH

We then motored up and down the Ouse to test how the Tohatsu pushed us through the strong current of the incoming tide. I've seen boats struggle in this current, but I found it kicked through the tide with ease. I was impressed with this boat and although I wouldn't go out more than a couple of miles offshore (unless with a flotilla of other SIBs), it would be an excellent boat for inshore angling. The 1m measure in the side of the boat is a great addition. The cross benches are comfortable and a padded seat can be added.

In my opinion it's really a one-man angling craft – although with two in it, fishing comfortably is absolutely possible and the craft is perfectly stable. I, like many anglers afloat, used to have a suspicion of inflatables used for fishing but the robust build of these craft, and ease of use and portability, has now converted me. They are immensely popular as a cheap option for getting afloat. Maintenance is easy and as long as you have a reliable engine, making sure you have the requisite safety gear – lifejackets, compass, portable radios and GPS plus suitable clothing of course – then these boats are ideal for inshore boat angling. ■

The H7 comes in two regular sizes with an airdeck 3.3m and 3.7m. A 4m version is available on demand which has a rigid aluminium deck. The Hydrus can now be purchased with or without pre-installed Railblaza ports. These ports allow you to attach many accessories available through the shop. The 3.3m Hydrus has two at the rear, one each side. The 3.7m, 4.0m and 4.2m has four, one in each corner. Accessories you can add include rod holders, camera mounts, navigation lights, bait tables, fish-finder mounts, plus lots more.

FEATURES

- **Heavy duty carry handles**
- **Reinforced plastic transom**
- **Fuel tank straps front and rear**
- **D Rings for securing gear**
- **Railblaza RIB ports**
- **Bow raised by 5cm for splash protection**
- **Heavy duty bow cleat and rope runner**
- **Reinforced aluminium seats**
- **1m fish measuring ruler**

RRP:

- **£599 for the basic H5**
- **£1,699 for the H7 Classic 370**
- **www.inflatableboatfishing.com**

WHAT'S ON

Your at-a-glance match events planner ● = Penn Sea League

AUGUST

● **17:** Southern League round 8 of 12 & open, Hillhead 8-1am, pegged, measure & return, £15 match entry, £5 pools, £10 pair, team of five free, 2022 League entry £25, booking ends one hour before start, book only, Darren 07919 073232, Mike 07983 579596, Ian 07736 004714 or Ant 07775 691916. Nick: southernleagueandopens@gmail.com

● **17:** Bedlington summer league Match 5, Boulmer, entry £12, heavy fish heavy bag, fishing 17.00-21.00, reg 15.30-16.00 at Boulmer car park, boundaries, the boiler at Howick to south end of Marden rocks, contact Steve Williams 07852 351493

● **18:** Llantwit Major Charity Open, Llantwit Major, Mark Cowell 07721 791210

● **18:** Irish Federation of Sea Anglers, 9-1pm, Cappaclough, check-in at the car park, entry; senior 15eur and junior 10eur contact: Chris O'Sullivan 0851 532770

● **24:** Excelsior Sea Fishing Club Open, Gynn cable end, 1.15-5.15pm. Contact Jay Cityzen 07999416559

● **25:** Skua angling club, North west 5 angler team leagues, Pwllheli, 11-3pm, meet in car park opposite cafe, £20 per angler, individuals welcome, book on through Skua Facebook page, bait restrictions: mackerel, lugworm, ragworm, squid only, no maddies/harbour rag, 3 hooks, minimum size limit 15cm

● **25:** Scottish Federation of Sea Anglers, Clyde and West. Numbers are limited to 150, fishing is 1-6pm. Reg is 11-1pm at the Royal West of Scotland Amateur Boat Club, PA16 7SE. Fishing Greenock Esplanade. Free entry to all juniors with participating adult, for more details and to book a peg please contact Chris Horn 0787 294480

PENN PLUS

● **25:** Bedlington Summer League Match 6, Dr House Howick entry £12, heavy fish heavy bag, fishing 12.00-16.00, reg 10.30-11.00 at Dr house car park. Boundaries Dunstinbrough castle to boiler at Howick, contact Steve Williams 07852 351493

● **31:** Hastings SAC D Moore Cup 8-Midnight, lug, fish, squid baits only, Mark Rogers 07770 973062, Colin Crosby 01424 430120, colinmichael123@gmail.com

SEPTEMBER

● **1:** Holt SAC Charity Open, Kelling, Mike 07858 758669 Tony 07780 793141 thomasamt@btinternet.com

● **6-7:** Welsh Pair's Festival Pwhelli and Abererch, contact Dave Cave 07493 149584

PENN PLUS

● **7:** Filey Fishing Festival, heaviest bag of fish fishing 2-6 weigh in by 7pm Filey sports bar, contact Scott Blowman 07934 049126

● **8:** Filey Fishing Festival, heaviest single cod match, fishing 10-4pm, weigh in for 5pm Station Hotel, Church Street, Filey, contact Scott Blowman 07934 049126

● **8:** Newport & District SAC Charity Open ST Brides, Tony Hart 07530 983667

● **8:** Irish Federation of Sea Anglers, 11-4pm Inch, check-in at the car park, entry: senior 15eur and junior 10eur, contact Chris O'Sullivan 0851 532770

● **12:** Southern League round 10 of 12 & open, Goring, 5-10pm, pegged, measure & return, £15 match entry, £5 pools, £10 pair, team of five free, 2022 League entry £25, booking ends one hour before start, book only, Darren 07919 073232, Mike 07983 579596, Ian 07736 004714 or Ant 07775 691916. Nick: southernleagueandopens@gmail.com

● **13-14:** Alan Gilbert Memorial, Holland, team of 15. Holland and Belgium national team v UK

● **14:** Leinster League Tommy Keogh Open, Dodds Rock & Roney Point 1-6, contact Alby Allan for details albertallan@hotmail.com

● **14:** Filey Fishing Festival, heaviest single fish match, fishing 2-6pm, weigh in by 7pm, Filey playing fields association, contact Scott Blowman 07934 049126

● **15:** Filey Fishing Festival, North of England codling championship, greatest weight of codling, fishing 10-4pm, weigh in Filey playing fields association, contact Scott Blowman 07934 049126

● **15:** Mick Kearney Open, Ballinesker 1-5, contact Alby Allan for details albertallan@hotmail.com

● **15:** Tata Steel Aberavon Open Aberavon, Alun Price 07824 382218

● **20:** Fishon Tackle, round 9, Eastney 8-12pm, signing in 6pm till 7pm from solider, pegged measure and release anything over 18cm, no bait restrictions, £10 member, £12.50 non-members, back up venue for all matches is Eastney, contact Ashley Dowdeswell 02394 007684 or 07807 639872

● **21:** Loch Ryan Sea Angling Association Open 2024, registration 3.30pm at the Commercial Inn Stranraer DG9 7JY, contact Gavin McCrae 07719 668586 or Facebook group Loch

● **21:** Samalite Chesil League round 8 of 10, Abbotsbury, 6-11pm, measure and release to the new SAMF chart for all species. Fish may be kept for the table or for bait but must be marked by snipping the tail after it has been recorded. Pre-book only, Dave Lane 07977 132951 Dave Lane: lanedc@talktalk.net

● **21:** Hastings SAC Hollingsworth Cup 11-4pm, lug, fish, squid baits only, Mark Rogers 07770 973062, Colin Crosby 01424 430120, colinmichael123@gmail.com

● **21:** Excelsior Sea Fishing Club Open, Glitterball time tbc. Contact Jay Cityzen 07999 416559

● **21:** Scarborough Angling Festival, Mick Hillaby Memorial Trophy, cod only 2pm till 6pm, entry £10, for details contact Ian Thompson 07956 270269

● **21-27:** Daiwa Irish Pairs, registration Saturday 21st, fishing 3 days from Sunday 22nd, presentation Friday 27th Sep, contact Darren Smith, 07904 506523

● **22:** The All-England Codling Championship, cod only, 11am till 5pm, entry £20, for details contact Ian Thompson 07956 270269

● **22:** Karl McLauchlin memorial top club team event, fishing 11-3pm, five angler teams, £25 per team all fishing clubs welcome, Amble pier to Tynemouth pier, weigh in Newbiggin bank house club 3:15-4pm. Penn points on heavy fish, pre-register only, contact Mick Davis 07907 200884

● **22:** East Region Shore League Sully & Bendericks, Ivor Smith 07854 829590

● **22:** Angling & Hiking Open, 70 Peg Limit, Middle Lane Ulverston. Booking on Kingfisher Car Park Ulverston LA12 9RA. Booking on 11.45am to 12.45pm. Fishing time 13.20pm to 16.20pm Total length, Pegged Match, 3 Zones, Concession and family pegs available, Entry fee via bank transfer £20 Senior, £10.00 junior, tied positions done on count back email ffabeach2020@gmail.com

● **28:** Southern League round 9 of 12 & open, Hayling or Eastney 9-2pm, pegged, measure & return, £15 match entry, £5 pools, £10 pair, team of five free, 2022 League entry £25, booking ends one

hour before start, book only, Darren 07919 073232, Mike 07983 579596, Ian 07736 004714 or Ant 07775 691916. Nick: southernleagueandopens@gmail.com

- **28:** Scarborough Angling Festival The Scarborough Open Angling Championship, 2pm - 6pm, entry £10, contact Ian Thompson 07956 270269
- **29:** Scarborough Angling Festival Hospital Challenge Bowl, heaviest single cod, 11am till 5pm, entry £15, for details contact Ian Thompson 07956 270269
- **29:** West Wales Flounder Festival, Pendine Sands, 10am-2pm, all prizes for longest catch of flounders, minimum size 30cm, £1,200 1st prize, one rod, three hooks, draw 7am-9am at Springwell Inn, booking available on West Wales Flounder Festival Facebook page, £15 entry, £2 optional pairs, juniors (U16) free, raffle, Tom Obrien, 07508 397886 thomascouriers@yahoo.co.uk
- **29:** Scottish Federation of Sea Anglers, Erskine. For more details and to book a peg please contact Chris Horn 0787 294480
- **29:** Reel Fun Fishing: Burnham League & Opens, 3 Match Series (all results count), fishing 4 hours up to high water and 1 hour down, meet and draw 12pm, fishing 1.30pm - 6.30pm, £30 League entry (pre-pay at Reel Fun), 100 per cent pay-out top 8 anglers, £20 entry per match (100 per cent pay-out), zone prizes, heaviest fish and winners' bonus, All pegged & zoned (3 zones), maximum 60 pegs available, 1 rod, 3 hooks, 18cm size limit on all species: catch, measure, witness, return and convert to weight (heaviest bag). No bait restrictions. Pre-book only: contact Reel Fun Fishing 01275 848652

OCTOBER

- **4:** Fishon Tackle, round 10, Pagham 8-12pm, signing in 6pm till 7pm from Sandy Road car park, pegged measure and release anything over 18cm, no bait restrictions, £10 member £12.50 non-members, back up venue for all matches is Eastney contact Ashley Dowdeswell 02394 007684 or 07807 639872
- **5:** Hastings SAC S.C.B.C. 11-4pm, lug, fish, squid baits only, Mark Rogers 07770 973062, Colin Crosby 01424 430120, colinmichael123@gmail.com
- **5:** Excelsior Sea Fishing Club Open, Cafe End Gynn, 10.30-2.30pm. Contact Jay Cityzen 07999 416559
- **6:** The British Open Deal, fishing time 11-4pm, booking in on Saturday night from 7:00pm to 8:30pm and from 6:30am to 9:30am on the Sunday, £30 entry which split to zones, biggest flat, biggest round and prize table for overall
- **6:** Skua angling club, North west 5 angler team league, Colwyn Bay, 6-10pm, meet on the prom left of beach cafe, £20 per angler, individuals welcome, book on through Skua Facebook page, bait restrictions: mackerel, lugworm, ragworm, squid only, no maddies/harbour rag, 3 hooks minimum size limit 18cm
- **6:** Barry Angling Festival/ Sea Masters Final Cold Knap-Porthkerry/Fontygary, Steve Chadwick 07777 689289
- **6:** Doreen Dalton Memorial Open, Heaviest Bag Roving Match, fishing 9-3pm, £15 entry pre book, Contact: Craig 07494 658642
- **6:** Maryport & District SAC, Autumn Open, 10-2pm Rover, heaviest fish, contact David 01900 605765, Jeff, 01900 870624
- **6:** Newbiggin Open, fishing 10.00-2pm, registration from: 8-9.30am. Tickets also in all local tackle shops 3 weeks prior. Competition HQ: Bank House Social Club, Front Street Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, £500 1st Prize, £4000 + of supporting prizes, £12 entry, £5 Juniors. Boundaries are from but excluding Seahouses breakwater in the north to but excluding Tynemouth pier in the south, all other piers and estuaries/ rivers within these boundaries are excluded. Call 01670 812214/365980
- **12:** Irish Federation of Sea Anglers, 5-9pm Banna, check-in at the car park, entry: senior 15eur and junior 10eur, contact Chris O'Sullivan 0851 532770
- **12:** Southern League round 10 of 12 & open, Goring, 5-10pm, pegged, measure & return, £15 match entry, £5 pools, £10 pair, team of five free, 2022 League entry £25, booking ends one hour before start, book only, Darren 07919 073232, Mike 07983 579596, Ian 07736 004714 or Ant 07775 691916. Nick: southernleagueandopens@gmail.com
- **13**: South Wales Sea Anglers Open Cardiff Foreshore, Rob Cole 07792 456428
- **13:** Weston Outcasts SAC, Burnham-on-Sea, Open competition. Sign on: The Lighthouse Inn, Burnham-on-Sea from 11am TA8 1LN, fishing 1-6pm. Presentation: Lighthouse Inn Burnham-on-Sea. Entry £20 includes flatfish pool. Rules: 1 rod, 3 hooks, 18cm size limit on all species: catch, measure, witness, return and convert to weight (heaviest bag). No tripods allowed on the beach prior to sign on. Contact Jason Brown for more information: 07792 292858
- **13:** East Anglian Sea League, teams of five and open, venue TBC, length to weigh conversion, £25 entry, juniors must be accompanied by an adult, pre-book only with Rob Tuck 07855 848967
- **18:** Edinburgh Winter Shore League, Newhaven (east), Reg 6-6.15pm @ Western Harbour View, EH6 6PG, fish 7-10pm, pre-book only. Contact Ian Campbell, 07907 805822
- **18-19:** Anyfish Anywhere 2-day event, Llandudno, Julian Shambrook 01803 213555
- **19:** Aldeburgh Blind Charity open, Aldeburgh beaches, fishing 10-3pm, contact Paul Harrison 07788 860562
- **19-20:** Hastings SAC 2 day open, 9.30-2.30pm day 1 and 10-3pm day 2, lug, fish, squid baits only, Mark Rogers 07770 973062, Colin Crosby 01424 430120, colinmichael123@gmail.com
- **20:** Irish Federation of Sea Anglers, 4-8pm Rossbeigh, check-in at the car park, entry: senior 15eur and junior 10eur contact; Chris O'Sullivan 0851 532770
- **20:** RNLI Open, 70 Peg Limit, Middle Lane Ulverston. Booking on Kingfisher Car Park, Ulverston LA12 9RA. Booking on 10.30am to 11.30am. Fishing 12.30pm to 15.30pm, total length, pegged match, 3 zones, concession and family pegs available, Entry fee via bank transfer £20.00 Senior, £10.00 junior, Tied positions done on count back, email ffabeach2020@gmail.com
- **20:** Northumbrian open, £12 entry, fishing 10:30- 14:30, weigh in Bank House club, Newbiggin. Boundaries: Tynemouth pier to sea houses south pier, all piers, rivers and estuaries excluded Contact Steve Surtees 07888 674873
- **25:** Edinburgh Winter Shore League, Joppa, Reg 6-6.15pm @ Promenade View, EH15 2ES, fish 7-10pm. Pre-book only, contact Ian Campbell 07907 805822
- **26-27:** Northern Ireland Federation of Sea Anglers 2 Day Open, East Antrim coast. Booking in on Friday at the Curran Court Hotel, Larne, Co Antrim 6-8pm. Pegged match. Entry £60.00 + £10.00 federation fee. First prize £1,200 with zones and overalls down to 10th cash and sponsored prizes. Contact Harry McKee on nifederationofseaanglers@gmail.com
- **27:** Reel Fun Fishing: Burnham League & Opens, 3 Match Series (all results count), meet and draw 9.30am, fishing 11am - 4pm, £30 League entry (pre-pay at Reel Fun), 100 per cent pay-out top 8 anglers, £20 Entry per match (100 per cent pay-out), zone prizes, heaviest fish and winner's bonus, all pegged & zoned (3 zones), maximum 60 pegs available, 1 rod, 3 hooks, 18cm size limit on all species: catch, measure, witness, return and convert to weight (heaviest bag). No bait restrictions. Pre-book only: contact Reel Fun Fishing 01275 848652

PENN POINTS: HOW IT WORKS

With £10,000 in tackle prizes, Penn points, based on entries, are awarded to the top three, plus section winners, and captors of the largest fish caught in each designated Penn match. Penn also awards a prize of a Spinfisher fixed-spool reel to the angler scoring the most points in matches shown in each issue. If there is a tie, the winner will be the angler whose total is from the greatest number of results and is then chosen on merit by the Angling Trust. An angler can win only one reel during the year. To win a prize you must be registered with the Penn Sea League – supply your name, address, phone and email. Send fixtures, results and league registration by email to Ian Bowell: ian.bowell@icloud.com

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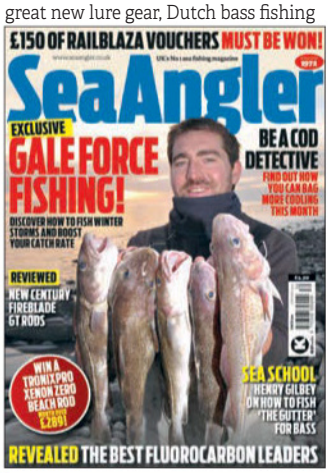
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Century are now one of the leading producers of top of the range surf rods, with fantastic advances in rod build technology, and one of the best finishes on the market, and top notch rings. Just pick one to suit your fishing you can't go wrong. Gerry's also now are the only supplier that can custom finish your rods, you need to call us to discuss your wants and needs. Gerry's have been building rods in house for 40+ years!

Some of the finest, most versatile rods, with Anti-twist technology ultra thin bite sensitive tips and Titanium K Guides
12-20lb 7ft 6" £344.99
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Tip Tornado Graphex Sport 13' 11" / 125-225g	Heavy - Mixed	£685.00	£599.99
Tip Tornado Graphex Supermatch 13' 6" / 125-200g	Light Heavy - Smooth	£640.00	£559.99
Tip Tornado Graphex Match 13' 6" / 125-175g	Mixed - Smooth	£635.00	£554.99
Tip Tornado Graphex Supermatch LD 13' / 50-150g	Mixed - Smooth	£610.00	£534.99
Tip Tornado Graphex Ultralite ST 13' / 50-125g	Smooth	£585.00	£509.99
Eliminator T1200 14' 10" / 125-225g	Heavy ground	£815.00	£714.99
Eliminator T1200 Salvador Bustos Edition 14' 4" / 125-225g	Heavy ground	£815.00	£714.99
Eliminator T1000 14' 10" / 125-200g	Heavy ground	£795.00	£694.99
Eliminator T900-SGT 14' 4" / 125-200g	Heavy - Mixed	£715.00	£624.99
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Eliminator T700-SGT 15' / 100-170g	Mixed - Smooth	£685.00	£599.99
Excalibur TT 14' 10" / 100-225g	Heavy ground	£795.00	£694.99
Excalibur J 13' 6" / 100-200g	Mixed ground	£615.00	£539.99
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NEW DAIWA KENZAKI SURF RODS

As you would expect from Daiwa, a new rod that will take some beating at this price. They look and fish like a rod twice the price!
UK built with a choice of 2 lengths 13ft 6" cast 4-7oz and 14ft 2" cast 4-8oz both with great tips that won't bounce around in the tide but as most Daiwa have exceptional bite registration and cast great. Movable reel seats and K style guides (braid friendly) and hybrid design suitable for multi or fix spool reel.

13ft 6" only £229.99 14ft 2" only £239.99

Zziplex ZIPLEX IS BACK AT GERRYS CALL FOR UPDATE ON LATEST STOCK!

Now in more limited range but still exactly the same as they were before buit on the same mandrils with same matierals. Still some of the best fishing and casting rods in the world with a fantastic following! Prices shown are for the standard finish still to a fantasic spec, but can be whipped to any spec you desire. Still built either in house at Gerry's or by world famous builder Chris Dance. Call us 01524-422146 to talk over your spec.

Profile GT 13ft 4" 100-180gms (glass tip) super slim 50/50 split blank with fantastic bite detection.....£525.00
Profile EVO 13ft 4" 100-180gms almost the same as GT but with a carbon tip for faster tides quicker recovery.....£525.00
M4 GT 13ft 4" 100-225gms (glass tip) one of the most sold all round fishing rod with fantastic bite detection £560.00
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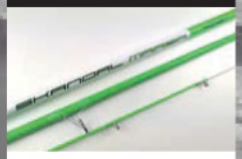
ALL RODS NOW COME IN A CUSTOM HEAVY DUTY ZZIPLEX ROD BAG

NEW SUNSET SURF RODS

SUNSET SKANDAL MAREA POWER SURF 14FT 4-7oz



Easy to use progressive action which is ideal to use fishing over clean to slightly mixed ground. It is fitted with a power tip making it suitable to use in stronger tides.

14ft 4-7oz
norm £87.99 **Gerry's £69.99**

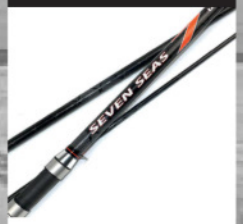
14ft 9" 4-8oz
norm £99.99 **Gerry's £79.99**

SUNSET HYPRA SURF 420 3PC

HYBRID SURF 14ft 4-8oz
All Hypra in Carbon "Technifibre" – blank Thin and powerful - 3 sections - Tubular reel seat - Anti-tangle "K Frame" SiC rings - Hybrid tip for optimal bite detection.
norm £137.99 **Gerry's £97.99**

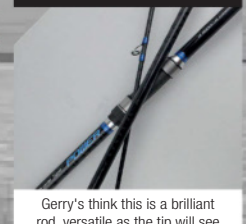
POWER SURF 15ft 4-9oz
Power tip, superb rock and rough ground continental
norm £139.99 **Gerry's £99.99**
Also available as a 15ft 3 piece same spec 4-8oz
norm £139.99 **Gerry's £99.99**

SUNSET SEVEN SEAS ULTRA POWER SURF 14FT 420 4PC 4-9oz



A powerful continental rod which is ideal for general all-round fishing on clean to mixed ground, ideal for faster tides and targeting larger species such as rays and hounds.
norm £199.99 **Gerry's £169.99**

SUNSET FORZA POWER SURF 14FT 420 3PC 4-9oz



Gerry's think this is a brilliant rod, versatile as the tip will see Flounders at distance but cope with 9oz casting weights, powerful slim rod but so light in the hand.
norm £384.99 **Gerry's £289.99**
Also available as a hybrid tip for the same money!

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- Carbonite Drag System with Cal's Universal Drag Grease
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- max drag 33lbs/15kg

Sizes: LX 10 **£179.99**, LX 15 **£179.99** and LX 20 **£219.99**

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Possibly the best £49.99 rods we've every seen they look like £100 rods! All 2 piece, top rings all braid friendly

- 8ft 8" 6-32gms
- 9ft 7-35gms
- 9ft 4" 8-38gms

JUST CHOOSE ONE TO SUIT YOUR LURE WEIGHTS!

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This superb lure is catch Bass and many species all over the UK and Norway.

Available in:
- 10cm--16gms £4.99
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In a variety of colours:
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Shakespeare SHAKESPEARE UGLY STIK GX2 SPIN

Almost unbreakable!
Available in 9ft 15-50gms or 10ft 20-8gms

Norm £65.99 **Gerry's £55.99**

PENN NEW PENN TIDAL BEACH

3 piece cast 4-8.5 oz slim powerful transportable!

13ft **£109.99** 14ft **£119.99**

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Now at lowest price ever get this whilst stocks last!

The latest addition to the bomb proof Penn Mag range, just look at the features:
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- 29" retrieve rate, 6.1:1 retrieve, 6+1 premium oiled spool bearings
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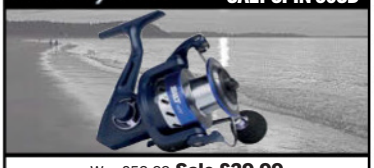
- Mono capacity: 515 yd/lb 255/15lb, 525 yd/lb 300/15lb
- 515 Weight 414gms, 525 Weight 416gms

NEW live spindle with free floating spool with Inboard bearings allow the spool to sit on the floating shaft

515 Mag RRP £189.99 **now £119.99**
525 Mag RRP £199.99 **now £129.99**

Shakespeare SHAKESPEARE SALT SPIN 50SD



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Possibly the best casting reel! Tough, two spools, perfect for braid or mono, 9+1 sealed stainless b/bearings, slow x line oscillation for extra easy long casting! Many more features!

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12 resealable zip sliding compartments

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Very tough!
37cm x 17cm x 28cm

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